

Valentin Alexandrovich Runov Duel of  
the Supreme Commanders. Stalin vs Hitler

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annotation

They are considered to be "military ignoramuses" and "talentless commanders-in-chief", guilty of "missed victories", defeats and losses of their armies. They are denied the strategic gift and the title of military leader, accused of unforgivable mistakes, flagrant miscalculations and war crimes. Do Stalin and Hitler deserve such derogatory assessments? Would the Wehrmacht have won its resounding victories without the adventurous courage, extraordinary decisions, crazy luck and strategic insights of Hitler? Would the Red Army have survived without the iron will, phenomenal instinct and dedication of Stalin, who knew how to be merciless not only to others, but also to himself? Is it true that the USSR won the war in spite of the Supreme Commander - or still thanks to him? This sensational book for the first time analyzes the activities of both commanders-in-chief

objectively and impartially, without regard to censorship, ideological blinkers and on-duty curses. Stalin vs Hitler! Soviet Leader against the Nazi Fuhrer! Russian steadfastness against German prowess! A merciless duel of the Supreme Commanders!

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the Supreme Commanders. Stalin vs Hitler

Introduction

Each century of human history puts forward its leaders, whose names become known throughout the world. The history of the 18th century included the names of Peter the Great, Frederick II, Robespierre, Marat, Catherine P. The 18th century remained in history as the century of Napoleon Bonaparte. A. Hitler and I.V. Stalin are identified as two of the most odious figures of the 20th century. Many books have been written about each of them, numerous feature films and documentaries have been shot. Each of these people is "branded" with specific crimes, while their exceptionally high organizational skills and achievements are noted.

Humanity develops in a spiral, each turn of which means a new stage of development. But the movement along this spiral is not equivalent: millennia passed from the invention of the wheel to the creation of a steam engine based on this wheel, from the first steam engine to the internal combustion engine - a little more than a hundred years. It took decades to penetrate the secrets of atomic energy, the creation of flying spacecraft and the general computerization of mankind. At this rate of progress, what will happen in the next decade and even next year is very difficult to predict. But humanity keeps in its memory the names of D. Wittom, T. Newcomen and I.I.

Polzunov, who became the creators of the first steam engine...

The 20th century became very rich in historical events. It was in this century that man subjugated thermonuclear energy, flew into space, and came as close as possible to the creation of radio-electronic intelligence. But this century was also remembered by two world wars, of which the Second World War (1939-1945) was the largest and most destructive in the history of mankind. The events of this war raised many names to the crest of

history, but the names of Adolf Hitler and Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin sounded the loudest.

Over the past decades, a lot has been written about Hitler and Stalin, and it would seem that everything is already known, and it is difficult to add something fundamentally new. Best for what

Maybe

count any researcher, this is what in the course of his work may emerge only

some new minor episodes, previously unknown. And by and large with this

one cannot but agree.

At the same time, a number of big problems remain unexplored, connected not so much with these two personalities as with the time they represented. Who can give definitive answers to questions like:

1. What are the true causes of the war between Germany and the USSR? Why did Germany, which had the bitter experience of the First World War on two fronts, in 1941 again decide to take the same step?

2. Why did the Soviet Union, which had powerful foreign agents, had information about the deployment of German troops near the border of the USSR, turned out to be completely

unprepared

to repel enemy aggression?

Many historians undertook to answer these questions, approached them from various directions, and the answers of many sounded quite convincing. We even agreed that A. Hitler was a mentally abnormal person, and I.V. Stalin deliberately did everything to harm his people. I think this is

completely untrue, and the only thing is that something higher dominated the usual historical logic and mathematical calculations - economics and

politics, the boundaries of which significantly extended beyond the borders of the Soviet Union and Germany.

I

I was born in the family of a front-line officer who met the Great Patriotic War in Western Ukraine near Ternopil as part of the headquarters of the Kyiv Special Military

districts. Then he retreated with battles as part of his unit to Kyiv, defended this

city, among the few escaped from the terrible Kyiv cauldron, which swallowed up about 600

thousands of his comrades. Moreover, his communications platoon happened to be at a small station

Sencha near Lohvitsa, in the area of which the enemy ring closed, and for two days heroically held the corridor for the exit of his troops. (After the war, this fact was devoted to a special exposition of the Senche school museum, which was dismantled in the 90s "due to irrelevance.") Later, he experienced all the horrors of the battles near Kharkov and near Stalingrad, was wounded several times and met the victorious 1945 in the ranks.

Then I spent my childhood and youth in Ukraine. I constantly communicated with participants in the recently ended Great Patriotic War, repeatedly visited the battlefields, saw trenches crumbling from time to time, found weapons and ammunition touched by rust, took part in the reburial of the remains of Soviet soldiers, the opening of obelisks over their graves. Participants in the battles of the Great Patriotic War, home front workers often spoke before us. I well remember their stories, well-structured in the spirit of communist ideology, well rehearsed by repeated repetitions. We children listened to them with great attention and, playing war, categorically refused to play the role of "Germans".

But even more I remember other stories or even ordinary conversations that war-wounded people often had. In the 50s and even 60s, there were a lot of cripples, disabled people without arms or legs, people with deep scars on their bodies on the streets of my native city. On quiet summer evenings, they usually gathered somewhere in the yard, knocked dominoes and had leisurely conversations about the war. It amazed me

What

these people calmly talked about the death of their comrades, about their wounds, about the difficult retreat, about other hardships and hardships

that fell to their lot, and they never blamed I.V. Stalin for this, and the name of A. Hitler was very rarely remembered. These were workers' wars, who treated their difficult work with great understanding and even love, and, as it

neither

seemed at that time strange - with respect for the enemy.

The topic of the tragedy of 1941 was discussed extremely rarely. The fact of the surprise attack and the numerical superiority of Germany over the Soviet Union was not disputed. But I remember how

Once, together with my father and several of his fellow front-line soldiers, I went fishing on the Southern Bug. They fished in the area where a

fortified area was built before the war, relying on this river as a natural barrier. And then for the first time I heard from the front-line soldiers, apparently,

a question that had tormented them for a long time: "How could it happen that less

how

in a month the fascists reached Kyiv, having overcome two lines of fortified areas, and why were the best armies of the Southwestern Front practically abandoned to the mercy of fate? And then I heard an answer that struck me very much: "The commanders in the German army were better than in the Red Army, and the soldiers were more educated and disciplined." This was the first revelation for me, which made me look at the past war as a confrontation between specialists, although even after that my attitude towards the Nazis remained the same.

In the early 1970s, I studied at the Kiev Combined Arms Command School. To conduct tactics lessons, we were often taken outside the city, to places where the Kiev fortified region was located before the war. At that time, many reinforced concrete long-term firing structures were still well preserved, which we examined with interest. We, the cadets, were amazed at the thickness of the walls of these pillboxes and the fact that none of them

of them did not find traces of combat damage. Finally, the teacher, already an elderly lieutenant colonel - a participant in the Great Patriotic War, drew attention to this and in his hearts threw out a phrase that was completely incomprehensible to us: "They didn't spend energy and money on that!"

Having become an officer, I served in the Carpathian military district and many times participated in the exercises that took place in the region of Lvov, Rovno, Lutsk. In June 1941, the troops of the 5th and 6th armies of the Southwestern Front were defending in those places, and many people were still alive - witnesses of the border battles. Then my service was held in Khmel'nitsky (former Proskurov). On business, I have

repeatedly been to Mogilev-Podolsky, Starokonstantinov, Letichev, Vinnitsa, Tulchin, Zhmerinka, Kazatin, Berdichev and other cities,

titles

which were repeatedly mentioned in the combat documents of the headquarters of the Southwestern Front. Many times I traveled to the line of fortified areas along the old (until 1939) and new borders of the Soviet Union, in every city I saw traces of the war and met people who witnessed the events

of the fiery summer of 1941. The stories of many of them amazed me with their revelation, which often did not fit into the official history of the Great Patriotic War.

Later, having already become a professional military historian, I, of course, could not help but study the available documents related to the tragedy of the summer of 1941 and other periods of the Great Patriotic War. By that time, in line with the "new thinking", some assessments of

historical events had already begun to change, and many critical works and frankly commissioned works suddenly appeared on the shelves of bookstores. The Soviet period of history, everything connected with the name of I.V. Stalin, began to move

exclusively in

black. The growing youth finally got confused in conflicting assessments and ... ceased to be interested in national history. Other life values came to the fore.

I taught the history of military art at the MV Frunze Military Academy. In the staff of our department, there were still many officers-scientists who constantly worked in the archives and believed documents more than the words of some politicians. Personalities I.V. Stalin and A. Hitler were most often considered by them through the prism of specific cases and evaluated according to their results. But I must admit that none of

these

leaders did not enjoy special authority.

In the late 80s, Colonel E.Ya. came to work at our department. Dzhugashvili is the grandson of I.V. Stalin after his son Yakov. I had the opportunity to work with him in the same team for about five years. It is quite understandable that with the advent of this person, who, by the way, could not be called an ardent Stalinist, the interest of the scientific and pedagogical team in the personality of I.V. Stalin grew noticeably.

By the nature of our activity, we were engaged in the study and analysis of specific operations and battles, mainly during the Great Patriotic War, which were then taught to students. And each time, studying specific operational documents in the archive, we had to understand in what general strategic environment they were created, what goals they pursued and what was done by the leadership of the country and the Red Army for their successful implementation. Therefore, the military work of I.V. Stalin, the Politburo, the Supreme High Command constantly received fairly objective assessments.

In the early 1990s, on the initiative of the former head of the Institute of Military History of the Ministry of Defense of the now Russian Federation, D.A. Volkogonov, a new wave of criticism of I.V. Stalin. A revision of the causes, course and results of the Great Patriotic War began. Our department was entrusted to take part in this work. For the first time, the

military archives of the Wehrmacht stored in Podolsk were declassified, new literary "works" and new "historical studies" appeared on the bookshelves. A new wave of demagoguery has risen, threatening to overwhelm the documented facts of Russian history and the history of the Great Patriotic War. Soon this wave reached the walls of the Military Academy, began to penetrate into the audience

audience. It became very difficult to work in such conditions.

In parallel with the uncontrolled revelry of various unverified information of the most dubious orientation, personnel turnover began at the department. Scientists-teachers with 15-20 years of experience were dismissed by order. They were replaced by young officers who, having barely mastered the basics of military-scientific and teaching work, were dismissed due to organizational and staff activities or voluntarily went into business. They were replaced by new people who had no longer passed the proper school. In this regard, the scientific and pedagogical potential of one of the main military historical teams of the country began to fall uncontrollably. In such an environment, it was possible to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War.

The anniversary of the 65th anniversary of the Great Victory for domestic military historians was marked by several "significant" events. Three main military historical centers in the country were liquidated: the Institute of Military History of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, the Department of the History of Military Art of the Military Academy of the General Staff and the Combined Arms Academy (the former Military Academy named after M.V. Frunze). And although the tasks of developing new military historical works based on archival documents and an objective analysis of historical events were left in place, the question legitimately arises: who will carry out this work and what will be its quality?

In this book, I do not undertake to open any new secret pages in the history of the Great Patriotic War, the biographies of A. Hitler and I.V. Stalin, just like introducing

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circulation of previously unknown documents. Also, I am little interested in the political activities of these leaders, the true roots of which are securely hidden.

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secret archives of a number of foreign ministries or even destroyed. I am interested in the military component of that large and multifaceted work that was done by the leaders of the main warring countries - the USSR and Germany - in the name of achieving victory in the largest war in the history of mankind and which somehow found its own

expression in concrete operations, actions, facts and figures. And one more thing - I want to share my personal

impressions of what I happened to learn in the process of life and service

By

the specified topic.

power struggle

Power does not come by itself. Power is the fruit of a hard and long struggle in the political, economic, and spiritual spheres. Not every person is given to get involved in

such a struggle and, moreover, to win it. This requires a lot of time, effort and money. The struggle for power is most often conducted in tough forms, when the parties do not disdain anything for the sake of victory. Lies, blackmail, bribery and even physical violence are used. AND

This

It's not just about opponents. Often this ruthless weapon is also used against comrades-in-arms, who at some point in the struggle become dangerous as carriers of compromising information.

But there are times when power comes to a person only because he was in the right place at the right time. Most often this happens during the revolution, when  
on

one leader is replaced by another. Then the entire "team" is replaced, and the resulting vacancies are quickly filled by people who at that time were next to the leader. Most often, such appointments are temporary, as the struggle for

power

flares up already surrounded by a new leader and "the revolution devours its children."

But there are cases in history when a person, having made the struggle for power the meaning of his life, achieved great success in this. This fully concerned I.V. Stalin and A. Hitler.

Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin (Dzhugashvili) was born on December 9 (21), 1879 in the Georgian city of Gori in the family of a handicraft shoemaker. At the age of 15, he graduated from the Gori Theological School and entered the Tiflis Theological Seminary. Later in his biography

it was recorded that Iosif Dzhugashvili was expelled for revolutionary activities in 1899. Researchers of different times have written a lot about this revolutionary activity, from positive conclusions to direct accusations of terrorism and cooperation with the police. Neither one nor the other presented direct evidence, so I will not develop this topic. Moreover, she is not directly related to the chosen one.

topic.

I'll stick with dry facts. An active participant in the revolutionary events of 1905-1907 in Transcaucasia, Joseph Stalin, being in exile since 1908, in January 1912

By

V.I. Lenin at the GU (Prague) Conference of the RSDLP was introduced in absentia as a member of the Central Committee and the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee of the RSDLP. This fact suggests that V.I. Lenin was well aware of the party activities of I.V. Stalin.

Joseph himself learned about his election to the highest bodies of the leadership of the Bolshevik Party only a month later from Ordzhonikidze, who had specially arrived in Vologda, and immediately escaped. He arrives in St. Petersburg, but a week later - a new arrest and exile in the Naryn Territory. And again, escape, return to the capital, the life of an illegal immigrant, trips to Lenin in Prague, a visit to Vienna, where he met with N.I. Bukharin and L.D. Trotsky. In Vienna, he wrote the article "Marxism and the National Question", which was published as a separate pamphlet in 1914 and became widely known among Marxists.

In early February 1913, after another meeting with Lenin in Krakow, Stalin returned to St. Petersburg, where he was again arrested and sentenced to exile in the Turukhansk region for a period of four years. In December 1916, the local authorities decided to mobilize Joseph into the army, and he was sent to the draft board in Krasnoyarsk, but she rejected him for health reasons. In Krasnoyarsk I.V. Stalin

learned

about the abdication of the emperor and the bourgeois revolution that had taken place in Russia, which gave him freedom.

I.V. Stalin immediately took advantage of the opportunity and on March 12, 1917, together with Kamenev, arrived in Petrograd, where they immediately took over the leadership of the Russian Bureau and the newspaper Pravda. As a result of this, I.V. Stalin actually became the head of the Bolsheviks in Petrograd.

On April 3, V.I. arrived in Petrograd. Lenin. At the April conference of the RSDLP (b) I.V. Stalin was again elected to the Central Committee as an expert on the national question. After V.I. Lenin to Finland, he actually remained at the head of the party. October 7th

IN AND.

Lenin again returned to Petrograd, where preparations for an armed uprising were in full swing. Three days later, I.V. Stalin was introduced to the Politburo of the Central Committee, a 16

October, headed the Military Revolutionary Center, which, however, did not play a significant role during the October Revolution, in contrast to the Military Revolutionary

committee during

led by L.D. Trotsky. Later, this became one of the stumbling blocks between these people.

In the first Soviet government, I.V. Stalin took the post of People's Commissar for Nationalities, a year later he headed the People's Commissariat of State Control. But he did not have time to prove himself in this matter, since in

connection with the Civil War he was introduced into

compound

Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, Revolutionary Military Councils of a number of fronts. Once again clashed with

L.D. Trotsky during the defense of Tsaritsyn, where he first became close friends with K.E. Voroshilov. But

during the years of the Civil War, I.S. Stalin couldn't.

Disease V.I. Lenin marked the beginning of a new stage in the struggle for power among the Soviet leadership. Stalin was actively involved in this process, rightly placing his stake on the role of the party leader. From April 1922 he was the

secretary of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party. In the following months, the secretariat of the Central Committee begins to rapidly gain political strength. On the basis of the struggle for power, friction between I.V. Stalin and L.D. Trotsky. Trotsky lost. In January 1924, at the XIII Conference, Stalin, Kamenev and Zinoviev achieved the adoption of a resolution that unequivocally condemned the activities of Lev Davidovich and deprived him of his last hope for leadership. And soon after the end of the conference in Gorki, V.I. Lenin. Power passed to the Politburo of the Central Committee, but in fact to

triumvirate Zinoviev-Kamenev-Stalin.

The struggle for power continued now at the level of the triumvirate. In January 1925, Zinoviev and Kamenev demanded that L. D. Trotsky be expelled from the RCP(b) and released

from

positions of People's Commissar for Military Affairs and Chairman of the RVSR, appointing I. V. Stalin to this position. In

practice, this meant the gradual removal of Joseph Vissarionovich from the party leadership. But I.V. Stalin figured out this

plan in time, L.D. Trotsky was occupied by M.V.

Frunze.

Shortly after the January plenum, the triumvirate split. Stalin moved away from his former allies and became close to N. I. Bukharin. Unfortunately, Zinoviev and Kamenev opposed the New Economic Policy (NEP). But the peasant, encouraged by the NEP, in 1925 worked in such a way that he was able to exceed the level of gross agricultural production in 1913 by 12%. This dispute continued in December of the same year at the CTU party congress, at which Zinoviev and Kamenev suffered a crushing defeat. I.V. Stalin

achieved the inclusion in the Politburo of V. M. Molotov, K.E. Voroshilov and M.I. Kalinin, securing for himself an overwhelming majority of votes in this highest body of party power. Important

it was also the fact that shortly before this, K.E. Voroshilov took the place of People's Commissar for military and maritime affairs instead of the deceased M.V. Frunze.

However, even after this, the position of I.V. Stalin was not as strong as it might seem. By the beginning of 1926, a conspiracy had developed within the party and Soviet leadership, outwardly loyal to the secretary of the Central Committee, with the aim of removing I.V. Stalin from this

post

and hand it over to F.E. Dzerzhinsky. At the head of the group of conspirators were A.I. Rykov and M.P. Tomsk.

But these plans were not destined to come true. On July 20, 1926, F. E. Dzerzhinsky died suddenly. In 1929, L.D. was expelled from the USSR. Trotsky. N.I. Bukharin, A.I. Rykov

And

M.P. Tomsky in the late 1920s opposed the curtailment of the NEP and the forcing of industrialization and collectivization, which was declared a "right deviation". At the April plenum of the Central Committee in 1929, they were sharply criticized and "crushed", and in 1930 they were removed from the Politburo. On the Olympus of power in the USSR was I. V. Stalin, who was tightly surrounded by a group of his supporters.

Adolf Hitler was born on April 20, 1889, ten years later than I. V. Stalin, in the Austrian city of Braunau am Inn, located on the border with Bavaria. He was the third son from the third marriage of a petty Austrian official who bore his mother's surname Schicklgruber. But my maternal grandmother and paternal grandfather had the surname Hitler,

And

the father of the future Fuhrer since 1876 was written under this surname.

In his youth, A. Hitler could not get a secondary education. He wanted to become an artist, and in 1906, when he was seventeen years old, he decided to enter the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, but could not pass the entrance exams. Nevertheless, Hitler remained in Vienna. Adolf also did not have a specific working profession. And for several years he was interrupted by odd jobs: he removed snow, beat out carpets, served as a porter at the station, worked at a construction site. Later, in the book Mein Kampf, he wrote: "Hunger in those years was inseparable from me, like a devoted guard, not for a minute

leaving

me and consuming everything I had... Life was an eternal struggle with this

ruthless friend." But unlike the desperate young people around him, Hitler was not subject to the vices of youth. He did not smoke or drink alcohol, he was not madly fond of women. He read a lot and spent most of his free time reading. He did not participate in the political life of Austria, but even then

began



improve your oratory by speaking in bunkhouses, charity kitchens, and other public places.

In the spring of 1913, Hitler left Vienna, moved to Germany and settled in Munich. Then he was 24 years old. He had no good education, no profession, no friends, no money. It should not be ruled out that he left Austria to avoid military service.

(The Austrian authorities had been looking for him for the purpose of conscription for three years already). But when the First World War began, already on August 3, 1914, Adolf filed a request to join the regiment formed in Bavaria as a volunteer.

He was a good soldier, fought on the Western Front, rose to the rank of corporal, was twice awarded for bravery: in December 1914 with the Iron Cross of the second degree, and in

August 1918 - Iron Cross First Class. The last award was given to the soldiers of the imperial army very rarely. Hitler proudly wore this cross for the rest of his life. November 1918, when Kaiser Wilhelm abdicated and the war was lost by Germany, A. Hitler met in the hospital, where he was being treated

from

consequences of the gas attack undertaken by the British near Ypres a month ago. It was then, by his own admission, A. Hitler decided to go into politics.

At the end of November 1918, Adolf returned to Munich, which by that time had changed a lot. In connection with the proclamation of the Bavarian Republic, the city was seething with various parties and dubious personalities.

| On May 1919, regular army troops from Berlin, along with Bavarian volunteers, killed several hundred people and overthrew the communist government.

Hitler was an opponent of communist ideas. The confusion and vacillation of power, the democratization of the army outraged him to such an extent that he voluntarily went to

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POW camp where he spent the winter. There he worked among the soldiers and informed the authorities about their moods, along the way completing courses of "political instruction". He became a member of the German Workers' Party, where he first met Captain Ernst Röhm and journalist Dietrich Eckart, who dreamed of creating a National Socialist Party in Germany. Soon they became not only associates,

But

and friends.

On February 24, 1920, in the famous Hofbräuhaus beer establishment, which had two thousand seats, A. Hitler organized a rally at which he delivered a speech and announced the program of the German Workers' Party. On April 1 of the same year, it became the official program of the now National Socialist Party of Germany, which was understandable and shared by the ranks of German society. The first point of the program contained the demand

for the unification of all Germans into a greater Germany. In the second, it was proposed to cancel the Versailles and Saint-Germain peace treaties, which infringed upon the interests of Germany. Anti-Semitic provisions of the

program were also made public. It was proposed that Jews not be accepted into the civil service, not allowed into the press, denied citizenship, and all who arrived in the Reich after August 2, 1914, should be evicted from the country. But the program was based on democratic slogans: the abolition of unearned income, the nationalization of trusts, the division of the profits of the largest industrial

enterprises with the state, the elimination of land rent and the prohibition of land speculation. The eighteenth paragraph of the program contained a requirement to punish traitors, usurers and speculators with death. The last, twenty-third point of the program provided for the creation of a strong centralized state power. These provisions are the same as

clauses demanding the unification of the Germans in the Reich were included in the Party's programs at Hitler's urging and show that even when the Party was barely known outside of Munich, Hitler looked far ahead.

Shortly after the National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany (NSDAP) was formed, Hitler cobbled together "groups of order" from notorious thugs and war veterans, headed by the convicted watchmaker Emil Maurice in the past. In October 1921, these "groups of order" were renamed assault squads. The stormtroopers were dressed in brown uniforms, and the swastika was chosen as the emblem of the party, at the suggestion of Hitler.

Hitler's ascent to the political Olympus began from Munich. In July 1921, he proclaimed the "principle of the leader", and the NSDAP gained a Führer. Then funds began to flow into the party. A party newspaper was established, which at first appeared twice a week.

week, and from the beginning of 1923 - every day. At that time, Rudolf Hess, Alfred Rosenberg, Hermann Goering became Hitler's closest associates.

Germany was in deep crisis. Enterprises were ruined, the rate of the German mark was rapidly falling. The workers and other working people of Germany grew poorer every day, realizing the hopelessness of this process. And the worse the state of affairs in the country became, the more confident the voice of the leader of the NSDAP, Adolf Hitler, sounded. In one of his speeches to a huge working audience, he said: "The government calmly continues to print miserable banknotes, since the termination of this process would mean the end of the government ... Believe me, our suffering and poverty are only getting worse. And the bad guys will get away with it. The

reason is simple: the state itself has become a major swindler and rogue. State of robbers! When a shocked people

learns that they will have to starve with billions, they will inevitably draw the following conclusion: we will no longer submit to a state that is based on the deceitful idea of the majority. We need a dictatorship..."

In the autumn of 1923, a crisis situation developed in the German Republic and in the state of Bavaria. On September 26, Chancellor G. Stresemann announced the resumption of reparations payments by Germany. Bavaria refused to comply with this decision. Hitler was in the forefront of the Bavarian troublemakers. Berlin warned that he would crush the rebellious by force. But the stormtroopers insisted that Hitler not give up, and he decided to act without delay.

November 8, 1923, when about three thousand Bavarian burghers gathered in a pub, her

attack aircraft surrounded, Hitler entered the hall and made his way to the podium. From there he announced  
What

the government of Bavaria has been overthrown, and military units and police units are already entering the city under banners with a swastika. Pushed by stormtroopers, the three top officials of the Bavarian government, to the surprise of the crowd, obeyed Hitler. Right there it was

started

the formation of a new government, which was entrusted to lead General Ludendorff. The riots continued. Around eleven o'clock on the morning of

November 9, Hitler, Goering and Ludendorff led a 3,000-strong stormtrooper column into the center of Munich. Behind the front rows of demonstrators, trucks with machine gunners moved, carbines hung on the shoulders of attack aircraft. By noon, the convoy reached the building of the Ministry of Defense, guarded by the police. A shootout began. Göring was wounded in the thigh. Hitler fled. Ludendorff was arrested on the spot. Rem surrendered in the building of the Ministry of Defense. The Nazi Putsch failed. The party was disbanded.

On February 24, 1924, a trial was started in Munich. It was covered by dozens of journalists. Hitler spoke at this trial, turning the defeat of the Nazis into his own triumph. He once again proclaimed his program of action, and all of Germany heard it through the newspapers. In his closing speech, he addressed the judges by saying:

"You have to pass judgment on us. This verdict will pass the eternal judgment of history. The verdict you will pass is known to me. However, that other court will not ask us questions: did you commit high treason or not? That court will judge us, the Quartermaster General of the old army (Ludendorff), his officers and soldiers as Germans who wanted only the good of their people and fatherland, who wanted to fight and die. You have the right to find us a thousand times guilty, but the goddess of the eternal judgment of history will only smile and tear to shreds the order of the public prosecutor and the decision of your court. She will justify us.

Ludendorff was acquitted. Hitler was sentenced to five years in prison. The court decision was made | April 1924, and already on December 20, 1924, Hitler was released from prison, and he was able to continue his political activities. Thanks to the "beer putsch" and the trial, he gained national fame, and Nazi propaganda soon started talking about the putsch as a great stage in the development of the Nazi movement.

It was in prison in the old Landsberg fortress, where Hitler was treated like an honored guest (guests, permanent gifts, separate beautiful apartments), he

began to dictate to Hess the chapters of his future book Mein Kampf. The first volume of the book was published in the fall of 1925. It immediately became a bestseller. 9 sold in the first year thousand

copies, in 1926 - 7 thousand, in 1927 - 5.6 thousand. In later years the book

also reprinted and sold.

After being released, Hitler continued his political activities. At that time, the Nazis in Germany were not particularly popular. In the 1928 elections for them

only 810,000 Germans voted, and they won less than ten seats in parliament. The party itself had 108,000 members. But exactly one year later there

were already 178 thousand in the party. members.

Wanting to have a reliable force at his disposal, Hitler created the SS by dressing them in black uniforms. He founded another newspaper, of which Paul became editor-in-chief.

Josef  
Goebbels.

At the end of 1929, an economic crisis broke out. Hitler used the situation to his advantage and the interests of the Fascist Party. The people of Germany supported him in the 1930 elections. 6.4 million people voted for the fascists, and they received 107 mandates. But the Communists also had 77 representatives in the Reichstag. The Weimar Republic was under threat of liquidation.

"The future belongs not to the parties of destruction, but to the parties that carry the strength of the people, who are ready and willing to associate themselves with the army in order to help it, when the time comes, to protect the interests of the people," Hitler later wrote. "Meanwhile, there are still officers in our army who are tormented by the question: how far can they go with the Social Democrats? But, dear gentlemen, do you really think that you have anything in common with an ideology that makes it a condition to eliminate everything that forms the basis of the existence of the army?"

The army heard these lines and treated their author with understanding. In 1927, the army command forbade the recruitment of Nazis into the Reichswehr, but in the army environment, the ideas of the nationalists met with approval, especially among young officers. It got to the point that German Defense Minister General Gröner was forced on January 22, 1930 to issue a special order prohibiting soldiers and officers from participating in the political struggle of the parties. But the officers were of a different opinion.

In the spring of the same year, three young lieutenants from the Ulm garrison were arrested for trying to involve colleagues in collusion: not to shoot at the rebels in the event of an armed Nazi uprising. These actions were qualified as treason, and the Minister of Defense, trying not to make the case public, ordered the officers to be tried for violating military discipline. But since this case became the property of journalists, the general's idea failed, and in the fall the lieutenants appeared before the tribunal on charges of treason.

A. Hitler was summoned to court as a witness and turned it into a platform for the propaganda of his party, evidence of its concern for the interests of the German state and the army. In particular, he said: "Our movement does not need violence. The time will come when the German nation will recognize our ideas, and then thirty-five million Germans will support me ... When we receive constitutional law, we will form such a state as, in my opinion, it should be ... "

September 1930 was a turning point in the life of the Germans. The unexpected success of the Nazi Party in the all-German elections convinced not only millions of ordinary citizens, but also many leading representatives of the business world and military leaders that

appeared

a force that cannot be overcome and must be reckoned with. Later, at the Nuremberg Trials, A. Jodl admitted that until 1930, senior officers treated Hitler

with

apprehension, believing that he intended to decompose the army, but after September 1930 their opinion about

Nazi leader has changed radically.

By the beginning of 1931, a group of like-minded people rallied around A. Hitler, in which the leading places were occupied by G. Strassmer, Rem, Goering, Goebbels and Frick. The consignment

continued to pursue an offensive tough policy. In the presidential election of 1932, A. Hitler won 38.8% of the vote. Hindenburg had 53% of the vote,  
E. Telman - 10.2%.

The campaign for the next elections to the Reichstag began. For A. Hitler, it was not entirely successful. The Nazis lost two million votes and 34 seats in the Reichstag, retaining 196 seats. Three-quarters of a million more people voted for the Communists than

previous elections, which resulted in them winning 100 seats. For the first time, the huge tide of Nazism subsided. But Kurt von Schleicher, who was elected chancellor, did not enjoy support in the country and the government.

By the beginning of February 1933, the tragedy of the Weimar Republic, which had lasted for fourteen painful years and consisted of clumsy attempts by the Germans to make democracy work, was drawing to a close. Being deprived of political power in the person of the middle class, the German Republic did not have a margin of safety.

On January 30, 1933, President Hindenburg, seeing no other way out of the situation and acting within the framework of the constitution, entrusted the post of German chancellor to Nazi Adolf Hitler. So a man with a Charlie Chaplin mustache, barely making ends meet in his youth

was

finally, an unknown soldier of the First World War, abandoned by everyone in Munich in the harsh post-war days, an eccentric leader of the "beer putsch", an orator who owns an audience, an Austrian, and not a German by birth, who was only forty-three years old, was sworn in as Chancellor of Germany. That night, Nazi assault troops marched frantically with torches, celebrating victory. Clearly breaking into columns, they marched under the

Triumphal Arch of the Brandenburg Gate. Brass bands played military marches loudly. To the deafening thunder of drums, the Nazis sang the new

anthem "Horst Wessel" and old warlike German songs, evoking the enthusiastic shouts of the crowd gathered on the sidewalk. The Germans rejoiced

that a man capable of awakening national feelings in the people was appointed to the post of chancellor. AND

only

few looked at this torchlight procession with doubt and anxiety ...

The culprit of this holiday, a joyful and excited Adolf Hitler, stood at the open window of the Reich Chancellery, watching the parade of his supporters, periodically throwing out his hand in a Nazi salute. Behind him and beside him crowded his comrades-in-arms. Later, Goebbels, tired and happy, returning home at three in the morning, wrote in

his

diary: "It looks like a dream ... like a fairy tale ... the birth of a new Reich. Fourteen years of work were crowned with victory. The German Revolution has begun!"

hzhayahya

Thus, the path to power for both I.V. Stalin and A. Hitler was not easy, rather thorny, but had a number of similar points.

Formally, I. V. Stalin was brought to power by V. I. Lenin, A. Hitler was brought to power by President Hindenburg. But their struggle for power was fundamentally different in one very important way.

moment  
- I.V. Stalin came to power on the wave of the October Revolution and the outbreak of her

Civil War, A. Hitler - within the framework of democracy that existed in the Weimar Republic.

JV Stalin, taking advantage of the situation of the Civil War, came to power in a matter of years, and fought for its strengthening for about eight more years, mainly with associates of V. I. Lenin. A. Hitler needed 14 years of continuous, active and diverse work for this.

After I. V. Stalin was elected to a prominent party post, he made the main efforts to make this post the leading one in the party, while simultaneously starting a tough fight with his rivals. A. Hitler came to power step by step, consistently solving one problem after another, constantly searching for new comrades-in-arms and new forms of struggle.

At the same time, it must be recognized that I.V. Stalin and A. Hitler came to power on the basis of some slogans, without concrete deeds behind them.

Both of them took advantage of  
V

due to the political and economic difficulties experienced by their countries and peoples, these slogans fell on fertile soil and were heard by millions.  
Difference  
V

slogans was only that JV Stalin promised the worldwide victory of communism and great benefits for all working people, and A. Hitler promised benefits to the Germans and played on the national feelings of his people.

I.V. Stalin waged his struggle under the conditions of a one-party system, in conditions when the only ruling Communist Party in the country decided the fate of the Soviet state. Therefore, not only huge human resources were soon in his hands, but also big party money, relying on the economy of the entire great country. A.

Hitler rose to power within the framework of the multi-party Weimar Republic, while simultaneously fighting for electoral votes and raising funds for party needs. In this respect  
He

was in a more difficult position than I.V. Stalin, and was forced to solve many problems only relying on personal capabilities and relying on his own strength.

Despite the difference and similarity of the process of the struggle for power between I. V. Stalin and A. Hitler, for both it ended successfully. In the process of this struggle, both leaders strengthened their positions in the ruling party and won the trust of the people. As a result of the successful completion of the struggle, they gained power in the most rapidly developing states of Europe, which they intended to bring to the most advanced, not counting

neither with

what sacrifices and costs. This was the path to dictatorship, which became the goal of both I.V. Stalin and A. Hitler, and the establishment of which they devoted the next years of their life.

## Path to dictatorship

Nothing characterizes and tests a person like power. All famous rulers passed the test of power, but only those who could withstand it left a noticeable mark on history. At the same time, some rudely used power for their own purposes,

while others skillfully covered themselves with concern for the welfare of the state and people. And only a very few were able to combine the private and the public to such an extent that subsequent historians who tried to separate these concepts faced a very difficult problem. The countries led by them in a short time made a big step towards progress, and the rulers themselves, using almost unlimited power and disposing of huge wealth, did not mess themselves up in acquisitiveness and luxury in any way.

This fully applies to I. V. Stalin and A. Hitler, whose personal disinterestedness, combined with the general development of the state, created the illusion of caring for the welfare of the state or people in many contemporaries and later researchers. In fact, these were means of struggle for the strengthening of personal power, for the establishment of a dictatorship, which was aimed at the benefit of the state in the sense in which Hitler and Stalin understood it.

By the beginning of the 1930s, JV Stalin's power in the USSR was practically absolute. The first five-year plan was successfully carried out, during which the main efforts were directed to the industrialization of the country, in particular, to the development of heavy industry. At the beginning of 1933, it was announced that the first five-year plan was completed 9 months ahead of schedule, and heavy industry achieved exceptional results, increasing output by 273%.

Complete collectivization began in the countryside. By the end of the first five-year plan, official statistics number 210,000 collective farms (70% of cultivated land), 4,300 state farms (10% of cultivated land), and 2,400 machine and tractor stations.

At the joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, held in January 1933, it was noted that during the period of the first five-year plan in the USSR it was possible to create its own industrial base for the reconstruction of industry, transport and agriculture. As a

result, the Soviet Union moved into the ranks of the most technically and economically developed countries. During this time such giants of black and

non-ferrous metallurgy, chemistry and energy, such as Magnitogorsk, Kuznetsk, Ural copper plants, Ridder polymetallic plant, Volkhov aluminum plant, Chernorechensky and Bereznikovsky nitrogen plants, Dneprostroy, Zuevskaya, Chelyabinsk and Shterovskaya power plants, powerful mines in the Donbass, Kuzbass and other enterprises. Such giants of mechanical engineering as the Stalingrad and Kharkov Tractor Plants were built, the construction of the Chelyabinsk Tractor Plant was being completed. The Rostselmash and Saratov combine plants, the Kommunar plants in Zaporozhye, and the Hammer and Sickle plants in Kharkov went into operation. Automobile plants were built: named after Stalin in Moscow, named after Molotov in Gorky, a heavy truck plant in Yaroslavl. Steam locomotives and wagons were produced at the Lugansk and Kolomna plants; turbines and generators for power plants - at the Stalin plant in Leningrad and "Turbostroy" in Kharkov.

Equipment

for ferrous metallurgy was produced at factories,

built in Kramatorsk, Sverdlovsk (Uralmash) and Izhorsk, Dnepropetrovsk. Aircraft construction and aircraft engine building were established in Moscow, Gorky, Voronezh, and Siberia.

It was noted that the entire engineering industry as a whole had grown 4.5 times in comparison with 1928, and 10 times in comparison with 1913. A new coal and metallurgical base Ural-Donbass was built. And this despite the fact that in connection with the crisis, the industrial production of the leading capitalist countries fell compared to 1928: in the USA - by 44%, in Germany - by 45%, in France - by 25%, in England - by 20%.

During this period, agriculture received more than 120 thousand new tractors and a large number of other agricultural machines, in connection with which the machine armament of this branch of the national economy doubled compared to 1928, and the sown area was increased by 21 million hectares. This made it

possible to double the volume of grain delivery to the state (from 700 to 1400 million poods), more than double the number of cattle (7.6 million heads), 2.4 times the number of sheep and goats (3.6 million heads) .

In subsequent years, economic growth in the USSR continued. In March 1939, the next 18th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks took place, at which I. V. Stalin made a report. Summing up the results of the second five-year plan (1933-1937), he noted that socialism had been built in the country, and the main

and decisive task - the completion of the technical reconstruction of the national economy of the USSR - had been

basically accomplished. Compared with the first five-year plan, industrial production has grown by 120.6%, labor productivity in industry by 82%. It was planned to increase in the third five-year plan, by 1942, the production of engineering and metalworking products - by 229%, steam locomotives - by 148%, automobiles - by 200%, coal - by

190%, electricity - by 206%, oil - by 177%, cast iron - by 152%, steel - by 158%. In agriculture, to ensure the

collection of 8 billion poods of grain, 282 million poods of sugar beet, 32.9 million centners of raw cotton. Increase the

number of cattle by 40%, horses by 35%, pigs by 100%, sheep and goats by 110%.

In parallel with the solution of national economic problems, already in the 1930s, JV Stalin's struggle for the establishment of a personal dictatorship in the country intensified. He begins to understand that the forcible

creation of collective farms harms and undermines the authority of the Soviet government, and therefore his - I.V. Stalin. On March 2, 1930, an article by I.V. Stalin "Dizziness from Success" appears in Pravda, in which he blames local

authorities for the catastrophic consequences of collectivization and restrains forced enrollment in collective

farms. And, as a result, already on March 14, the decree of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks "On the fight against distortions of the party line in the collective farm movement" was

published. The share of collectivized peasant farms immediately falls from 55% in March to 24% in June.

Article once again



plays to the advantage of the authority of I.V. Stalin, separating him from those objectionable to the people officials.

These events preceded the HUT party congress, which opened in Moscow on July 26, 1930. This congress consolidates the victory of the communists (hence, of I. V. Stalin) over

"Right Opposition" and confirms the course taken for an accelerated transition to socialism. Shortly after the end of the congress, the opening of the counter-revolutionary organization "Labor Peasant Party" is announced, under the guise of "fighting sabotage", the struggle against the intelligentsia and the process of the "Industrial Party" begin. As chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, objectionable A.I. Rykov is replaced by I. V. Stalin's ally V. M. Molotov.

The spring of 1931 was marked by a new high-profile political process - the exposure of the "Union Bureau of the Mensheviks". To tighten management in the countryside, the Union of Unions of Agricultural Cooperation of the USSR is being liquidated. All management of agriculture is entrusted to the People's Commissariat of Agriculture and the People's Commissariat for Supply, which are tightly controlled by the highest party power.

In the same year, a new round of Soviet-German relations began to take shape. In April, the German-Soviet trade agreement is signed. Germany provides the USSR with a loan of one billion marks for the purchase of machinery and equipment in exchange for Soviet gold and agricultural products. Then the Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality with Germany of 1926 (Berlin Treaty) is extended for three years. The protocol to it will be ratified on May 5, 1933, a few months after A. Hitler came to power.

At the end of January 1932, at the KhUP party conference, directives for the 2nd five-year plan for the development of the national economy of the USSR for 1933-1937 were drawn up. JV Stalin demands that realistic goals be set, warning zealous officials against exaggerating them too much. Priority is still given to the development of energy, ferrous metallurgy, mechanical engineering and transport. But at the same time, Iosif Vissarionovich also demands to improve the situation with the production of consumer goods.

In February, the final blow was dealt to the authority of L. D. Trotsky, who was deprived of Soviet citizenship. I. V. Stalin does not tolerate any dissent next to him, his

authority is increasingly taking on the shape of an undisguised cult of personality.

At the same time, Stalin takes care to impress the general public as a caring and just ruler. On June 25, on his initiative, a resolution of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR "On revolutionary legality" was adopted, which condemns dispossession, demands that the role of the court and the prosecutor's office be increased, and that the class struggle be waged within the framework of socialist legality.

It doesn't quite work out. At the end of the summer, M.N. Ryutin and A.N. Slepkov spread the so-called "Ryutin platform", the economic part of which is close to the ideas of the "right opposition". The authors of the "platform" call for a return to the democratic norms of party life and the removal of JV Stalin from the leadership as the "evil genius of the revolution." JV Stalin sharply opposed M. N. Ryutin, condemning his "platform", and even demanded a death sentence for the author "for terrorist activities." But the majority of the members of the Politburo did not agree with this, among which was S. M. Kirov. Nevertheless, in October 1932, M. N. Ryutin was sentenced by the OGPU to ten

years of imprisonment, and in January 1937 he was shot. A.N. Slepikov, together with M. N. Ryutin, was sentenced to five years in prison and shot in May 1937.

The struggle of I. V. Stalin with his political opponents was gaining momentum. In October, the expulsion from the ranks of the CPSU (b) of "Ryutin's accomplices", including L. B. Kamenev and G. M. Zinoviev, who were sent into exile, followed. And on the night of November 8-9, she finished with

the wife of Joseph Vissarionovich, Nadezhda Alliluyeva, after which he finally withdrew into himself, and his activities took on exceptionally harsh forms.

On January 12, 1933, the decision of the Central Committee was made to carry out a purge in the party. For various reasons, about 800 thousand people are "cleansed" from its ranks in two years. The atmosphere of general denunciation penetrates into various collectives, more and more people are deprived of party tickets for various, sometimes far-fetched misconduct and statements.

At the end of December of that year, at a meeting of the Central Committee, V. M. Molotov and M. M. Litvinov for the first time in their speeches declare that Nazi Germany poses a threat to the security of the USSR:

In January 1934, the XUP Congress of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks was held in Moscow. For I. V. Stalin, this congress becomes memorable because about 300 delegates voted against his entry into the new composition of the Secretariat of the Central Committee, preferring S. M. Kirov to him. The last one was killed | December in the building of the Leningrad Regional Party Committee under unclear circumstances. And

half a month later, L. B. Kamenev and G. M. Zinoviev were arrested, who soon appeared before the court in the case of the so-called "Moscow Center", receiving respectively 5 and 10 years in prison.

On January 24, 1935, a message arrives about the sudden death from a heart attack of the chairman of the State Planning Committee of the USSR V. V. Kuibyshev. On June 7, by the decision of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, A.S. Yenukidze. N. I. Yezhov in his report accuses him of preparing a conspiracy against I. V. Stalin.

From the beginning of 1936, another purge of the party began, timed to coincide with the exchange of party cards. On June 27, a closed letter of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks appears, declaring all supporters of L. D. Trotsky and G. M. Zinoviev enemies of the Soviet government and declaring

the need to identify and destroy them. At the end of August, the first open "trial of the sixteen" takes place in Moscow. Among them are G. M. Zinoviev, L. B. Kamenev and others. They

are accused of creating a "terrorist Trotskyist-Zinoviev center." All the defendants confess that they kept in touch with L. D. Trotsky, were accomplices in the murder of S. M. Kirov and prepared a conspiracy against J. V. Stalin and other leaders of the state. They also testify against N.I. Bukharin, A.I. Rykov

and M.P. Tomskey. Despite this, all 16 were sentenced to death and shot. MP Tomskey, chairman of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, committed suicide on August 22 without waiting for his arrest.

On August 27, the USSR, along with other European states, signs an agreement on non-intervention in the civil war in Spain. Subsequently, Germany and the USSR violated this agreement in the most flagrant way. In October, the Soviet ambassador in London, I. Maisky, protests against the assistance that Germany and Italy provide to the Franco government, and declares that in such circumstances the USSR does not consider

bound by a non-intervention pact. The shipment of Soviet military equipment and advisers to Spain begins.

Inside the Soviet Union, the liquidation of people objectionable to JV Stalin continues. On September 23, another associate of V. I. Lenin, K. B. Radek (Sobelson), was arrested. During the investigation, he agreed to

make any revelations and testify against anyone. He became the central figure in the case of the "Parallel Anti-Soviet Trotskyist Center", while naming a huge number of names among the conspirators. IN

"gratitude" for cooperation K. B. Radek was sentenced to only 10 years in prison

freedom. In his last speech, he said: "I am not fighting for my honor, I have lost it, I am fighting for the recognition of the truth of the testimony that I gave." This did not save Radek, in the camp in May 1939 he was killed by criminals.

November 25 Germany and Japan sign the Anti-Comintern Pact, which includes secret protocols directed against the USSR. And on December 5, the Extraordinary Congress of Soviets adopts the new "Stalinist" Constitution of the USSR.

At the end of January 1937, the second open trial took place in Moscow ("trial of the 17" on the "Anti-Soviet Trotskyist Center"). Among the accused are G. L. Pyatakov, K.

B. Radek, L. P. Serebryakov, G. Ya. Sokolnikov (Brilliant) and others. 13 people were sentenced to death, including G. L. Pyatakov and G. Ya. Sokolnikov, the rest to long terms of imprisonment.

In the 1920s, the basis of the command personnel of the Red Army was made up of people who came to command the troops on the wave of the revolution during the Civil War, selflessly

devoted to the idea, but did not have a proper military education. So, in 1932, German intelligence believed that the strength of the Red Army by that time "has risen to such an extent that it is able to wage a defensive war against

any enemy ... With its numerical superiority, the Red Army is able to wage a victorious offensive war against its

immediate neighbors in the West (Poland, Romania)..."

Further in the report it was noted: "... the time has come to create an initiative and strong-willed commander of all degrees. However ... there is a danger that this will not be carried out in a timely manner ... Until now, the army suffers from the fact that, starting from the platoon commander and ending with the regiment commander, the commander is not yet full-fledged. In their mass, they are only capable of solving the tasks of a non-commissioned officer. Despite all the measures, the problem of the commander of the Red Army has not yet been resolved.

Somewhat higher in this document was the assessment of the senior command staff of the Red Army. According to a German intelligence report, all commanders of districts, corps, and the vast majority of division commanders had experience in commanding units and formations during the Civil War, which "cannot be indicative in moral matters, but gave many good examples of the actions of large masses of troops in spatial

expanses,

combination of infantry, cavalry and artillery actions.

After the end of the Civil War, most of the Soviet military leaders were trained in various courses and military academies, and gained a lot of practical experience in exercises. That is why in preparation for a future war

main

the efforts of the intelligence services of many countries, and above all Germany, were aimed at weakening the corps of the senior command staff of the Red Army.

A lot of literature has been written about the repressions in the Red Army in the period of 1937-1938. Most of the authors of these works deliberately exaggerate and interpret historical events one-sidedly. I do not want to repeat their works, nor to dispute the validity of this or that position. I admit that there were repressions in the Red Army during this period, but for me it is more important how they influenced the combat capability of the Red Army in the last pre-war years.

It must be admitted that after the trial of Tukhachevsky and other military leaders in 1937, no one in the USSR doubted the existence of a military Trotskyist fascist conspiracy in the Red Army. All political processes of that period took place under this banner and acquired a huge scope. As a

result of these processes, hundreds of prominent Soviet leaders, tens of thousands of lower-level leaders, and millions of ordinary citizens were shot and ended up in camps. This quickly weakened the Soviet country during

all

spheres of its activity, but above all, it caused damage to military science, the military-industrial complex and directly to the highest level of management of the Red Army.

It should also be noted that the repressions of 1937-1939 caused great damage to the international prestige of the USSR in the eyes of its allies. So, the Czechoslovak side, from which documents were received on the charges of Marshal of the Soviet Union M.N. Tukhachevsky, already in the second half of 1937 expressed great concern about the weakening of the Red Army. On this occasion, a major clash occurred at a conference of representatives of the Czechoslovak and Soviet military intelligence, held

V

Prague in December 1937. Shortly thereafter, the Czechoslovak General Staff

lost interest in an alliance with the USSR, that he refused to create a commission to coordinate the defense plans of both states, fearing that these plans, given the presence in the USSR of such a number

spies among the top military leaders, will immediately become known to the enemy.

The Tukhachevsky case brought deep anxiety into French politics and led to a severe crisis in relations between France and the USSR.

Negative views in relation to repression in the USSR were held by official London. In early May 1938, the British Foreign Minister Halifax tried to convince the Czechoslovak envoy in London, Jan Masaryk, that

purges reduced the combat effectiveness of the Red Army so much that a significant contribution  
MOSCOW

in a future war with Germany becomes very problematic. The same opinion was held in Washington.

Information about the disclosure of a military conspiracy and repression against representatives of the highest command of the Red Army greatly worried the French government and led

To

freeze Franco-Soviet relations. Already two days after the execution of Tukhachevsky and his comrades, the French ambassador Kulondor visited the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR M. M. Litvinov in order to explain to him the "deplorable impression" that arose

V

countries friendly to the USSR, as a result of the trial and the brutal reprisal. Of course, the fate of Tukhachevsky and others was the least of the French's concerns. He was worried about another question - how should the accusations of espionage brought against the generals be regarded? Maxim Maksimovich could not answer anything concrete, except for the conclusion that the liquidation of the Germanophile group in the leadership of the Red Army should benefit Franco-Soviet relations.

The French diplomat did not let up. Two weeks later, he asks the First Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR V.P. Potemkin: "To what extent executed

officers involved in a conspiracy with Germany? Potemkin only replied that Tukhachevsky

And

his accomplices wanted to stage a coup d'état and ally with Germany. The French government, impressed by the events that took place in the USSR, decided to conduct military contacts with the Soviet Union as carefully as possible. Already on the autumn maneuvers of the French troops, held in 1937, the Soviet

the delegation was not invited.

The reaction of Western countries towards the USSR immediately became known to Germany. The German ambassador in Moscow, Count Schulenburg, repeatedly noted this in his letters. On April 14, 1938, the German ambassador in Paris, Breuer, wrote to the German Foreign Minister in Berlin: "During the past year ... (appeared. - Auth.) Great doubts about the strength of the Soviet regime, the power of the Red Army and the goodwill of the Soviet government. The execution of the generals, who in the French general staff were considered highly qualified officers ... showed the dubiousness of the regime, prominent figures of which, according to its own statements, had been engaged in sabotage and betrayal for many years.

Thus, in the 1930s, JV Stalin did everything possible to establish and strengthen his personal dictatorship in the Soviet Union. This work was carried out simultaneously in several directions. Physically and morally, people who had great authority in the party and who could compete with I.V. Stalin were destroyed. Secondly, new people were appointed to replace those who left, based on personal loyalty to the leader. Thirdly, pursuing domestic policy, I.V. Stalin sometimes acted by the method of "carrot and stick", either raising or weakening the demands on the

people. At the same time, the illusion of a struggle between the general secretary and local officials was created. As a result of this, JV Stalin managed to bring personal power in the country to an absolute stage by the end of the 1930s, and to bring the country into the ranks of the most dynamically developing countries in Europe.

Adolf Hitler also strove with all his might for a personal dictatorship. In 1933, President Hindenburg, seeking to find a way out of this difficult situation, relying on the army and conservatives, appointed him Chancellor of Germany. It would seem that,

dream

Nazi leader came true, but he looked much further. However great his political power was, it remained incomplete. She had to share with those three

forces that

put him at the head of the government and who, not being participants in the Nazi movement, treated him with a certain amount of distrust. Consequently, the primary task of the new chancellor was to remove these forces from the helm of power.

On the evening of January 30, 1933, five hours after taking office, A.

Hitler called the first meeting of the cabinet and proposed to dissolve the Reichstag and call new elections. His arguments were convincing, new elections were scheduled for March 5, 1933. But the results of these elections, in conditions when the Nazis had all the levers of pressure on the authorities and the people, were predetermined in advance. "Now it will be easy

lead

struggle," Goebbels wrote in his diary on February 3, "for we will be able to mobilize All

state funds. We have radio and print. We will unleash great propaganda. And now we will have plenty of money ...".

The Nazis considered the Communists their main political opponents. On February 27, the Reichstag was set on fire. The true truth about this fire remained

unknown, almost everyone who knew something died or was destroyed. The researchers of this problem write that it was arranged by a group of stormtroopers who

By

the underground tunnel connecting the Reichstag building with Goering's palace, they entered the building of the German parliament, where they

staged a diversion. But there is still no hard evidence of this act, although its political significance is undeniable.

On February 28, the day after the fire, A. Hitler submitted to President Hindenburg for signature a draft decree "On the Protection of the People and the State," which suspended seven articles of the constitution that guaranteed individual freedom and the rights of citizens. The decree also gave the government of the Reich the right to exercise full power in the lands, when necessary, and

enter

the death penalty for a number of crimes, including a "serious disturbance of the peace" by armed men. He demanded to limit the freedom of the individual and freedom of opinion, including freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and association, to grant authorities

the right to interfere in the correspondence and telephone conversations of citizens, to arrange house searches, to confiscate property. Hindenburg went to sign this decree, and Hitler, with the help of one act, practically received unlimited power in the country.

And he took full advantage of this power. Trucks full of attack aircraft roared through the streets of German cities. They broke into houses, raided, searched and drove their victims to the barracks. There, people were mercilessly beaten and tortured. The press and meetings, especially of the Communists, were banned, and if the ban was violated, they were dispersed by force. Only the Nazis and their allies could freely conduct an election campaign.

The elections, as planned, took place on March 5, 1933. On them, the Nazis scored 17.3 million votes (44%), ahead of other parties. This was enough for the successful work of the Nazi Party in the government, but far from enough for A. Hitler to achieve his main goal - the establishment of a personal dictatorship.

On March 31, A. Hitler promulgated a law on the dissolution of parliaments in all states except Prussia, ordering their composition to be reorganized in accordance with the distribution of votes on last elections to the Reichstag. The communists were replaced by the Nazis.

On April 7, A. Hitler issued a decree establishing a new position in all lands - the governor of the Reich, who was given the right to form and dismiss the local government, dissolve parliament, appoint and dismiss officials and judges. Of course, the governors of the Reich were appointed by the ruling Nazi party, or rather, by A. Hitler.

So just a month after the "democratic" elections, A. Hitler practically usurped power in the country. On January 30, 1934, he completed this work by issuing a decree on the reorganization of the Reich. The people's assemblies in the states were abolished, the sovereign rights of the states were transferred to the Reich, all their governments were subordinate to the center, and the governors were directly subordinate to the Reich Minister of the Interior.

The main issues on the agenda are:

1. How to establish relations between the SA and the army?
2. How to pull the country's economy out of the quagmire and provide jobs for six million people?
3. How to organize the secret rearmament of the army, despite the prohibitions of the Geneva Conference?
4. Who will be the president of the country when Hindenburg dies or retires?

Rem, whose detachments numbered about two million people (20 times more than the soldiers of the regular army), bluntly stated that he was ready to force the army to carry out

Nazi decisions. But A. Hitler was more cautious. The influence in the army of big industrialists, aristocrats, landowning junkers and old Prussian generals was too strong to act in a bold manner. He tried to get along with the generals and demanded that the stormtroopers only pave the way for political power, but did not want to replace the army with them. This led to discontent among the stormtroopers, who considered themselves

masters of the situation. Rem expected to become Minister of Defense, subjugating himself, in addition to attack aircraft, and the army, but the military personnel were opposed to this. Later, Brauchitsch admitted: "the rearmament of the army was too serious and complicated a matter to allow embezzlers, drunkards and homosexuals to it."

Within the Nazi Party itself, the struggle for power also continued. Two strong opponents, Goering and Himmler, united against Rem. Goering appointed Himmler chief of the Prussian Gestapo, after which he immediately set about creating the empire's secret police. Goering himself, whom Hindenburg promoted to general of infantry, changed his brown SA uniform to the uniform of the military department.

On the night of June 30, 1934, A. Hitler, taking Goebbels with him, flew to Munich. Rem and his men slept peacefully in their beds. That night, a number of Nazi leaders, led by Rem, were arrested on charges of conspiracy. Some were immediately shot.

Rem Hitler entered the room alone. He threw Rem clothes and ordered to get up. Then Rem was taken to Munich and placed in prison. Remus was "graciously" offered to shoot himself, but he refused. After that, two SS men entered the cell and shot the arrested man point-blank.

Goering and Himmler were active in Berlin at that time. About 150 SA leaders were arrested and shot at the walls of the barracks of the cadet school in Lichterfeld. At the same time, special police units also killed some political figures, whose loyalty A. Hitler doubted. How many people died in

"night

long knives", is still unknown. Speaking on June 13 in the Reichstag, A. Hitler stated that 61 people were shot, including 12 senior leaders of the SA, another 31 died "while resisting arrest" and three "committed suicide" - a total of 92

people. But the White Paper on

purge", published by emigrants in Paris, says that 401 people were killed. At the Munich Trials in 1957, the figure sounded - more than 1,000 people.

On August 2, 1934, President Hindenburg died. Immediately after his death, Goebbels officially announced that the field marshal had not left any will. It was decided to hold a referendum. On August 19, 90 percent of Germans voted for A. Hitler. His power in Germany became unlimited.

The creation of the Third Reich began as part of the implementation of the program proposed by the Nazis. I will not describe all the economic transformations in Germany at that time, but I will note that during the period from 1932 to 1937, the country's national industrial production increased by 102 percent. Unemployment was eliminated due to a sharp increase in the front of public works. There were significant tax cuts for those

companies that expanded capital investments and ensured employment growth.

The rearmament of industry was begun, for which the Nazi regime spared no expense. The trade unions were dissolved and replaced by the so-called "workers' front", whose main task was not to protect the rights of workers, but to "create a truly social and productive community of all Germans." The workers of Germany were firmly attached to their workplace, their work became more intensive, and

less income.

A. Hitler's special attention was riveted to the army, the construction of which was started contrary to the Treaty of Versailles. March 16, 1935 A. Hitler signed the law on universal military service. England and France silently swallowed this pill. Moreover, England signed a document according to which Germany was allowed to build surface ships and submarines of large tonnage. Goering was actively engaged in the construction of military aviation. Tank troops, artillery, engineering troops were created. Training grounds were required for the high-quality training of these troops.

On May 2, 1936, Italian troops captured Addis Ababa, the capital of Abyssinia, and on July 4, the League of Nations capitulated, lifting sanctions against Italy. In two weeks

after

This Franco raised a military mutiny in Spain - a civil war began. July 22 A.

Hitler decided to help the Spanish rebels. sent to Spain



equipment and people who got the opportunity in practice to improve their combat

skill.

On January 30, 1937, in his speech in the Reichstag, A. Hitler solemnly declared that "Germany removes its signature from the Treaty of Versailles." It was an open call.

to the world community, but the West pretended not to notice this. It seemed that neither the governments of France and Great Britain, nor their peoples, nor the Germans themselves at the beginning of 1937 yet understood that A. Hitler was preparing for a big war and was doing

everything possible for

her

approximations.

On June 24, 1937, Field Marshal von Blumberg, Minister of War, issued a secret directive to the commanders of the branches of the armed forces. In it, he wrote: "The general political situation gives the right to assume that Germany does not have to expect an attack from any side. Despite these facts, the unstable political balance in the world, which does not exclude unexpected incidents, requires the constant readiness of the German armed forces for war ... in order to be able to use militarily

politically

favorable conditions, if any. Of course, this directive was agreed with A. Hitler.

A. Hitler continued to work to strengthen the sole power. In January 1938, he arranged the resignation of the Minister of War and Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal von Blomberg, accusing him of marrying a prostitute. Then the commander-in-chief of the ground forces, Colonel-General Baron Werner von Fritsch, who was the first contender for the vacant post of Minister of War and Commander-in-Chief, was dismissed. You, as Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces, A. Hitler, after some hesitation, approved Walther von Brauchitsch. This work was successfully completed by early February 1938.

In that year, A. Hitler decided to take over Austria, in which riots provoked by the Nazis had reigned for two years. He acted under the pretext of defending the interests of the Germans in that country. The Austrian government was practically given an ultimatum. IN

March Austria fell. England and France again "cautiously" kept silent this time. At noon on March 12, Goebbels read Hitler's address on the German and Austrian radio. In it, the Fuhrer justified the aggression and promised that the people of Austria would choose their future through a real plebiscite. Hitler himself went to his small homeland, where he was greeted with enthusiasm by the masses. The plebiscite took place on April 10, 1938. The Nazis and well-known Austrian politicians trained by them suggested that the people vote for the Anschluss. When the vote count ended, it was announced that 99.75% of the Austrians had voted in favor.

After the annexation of Austria, Hitler did his best to prepare an operation against Czechoslovakia, the most important component of which was the political component. At the same time, this operation, codenamed "Grun", was carefully designed and

was

military side. The directive signed by A. Hitler on May 30 read: "My

the unshakable decision is to defeat Czechoslovakia in the near future by conducting a military campaign. And it was further stated that "the execution of the directive

must be provided no later than October 1, 1938.

It was the Fuhrer's decision. But, oddly enough, many of the highest military officials of Germany became in opposition to him. These days, General Jodl made the following entry: "Sufficiently sharp contradictions are revealed between the Fuhrer's intuition, which suggests that we must do this this year, and the army, which believes that we are not able to do this.

to do, since the Western powers will certainly intervene, and we still cannot equal them. So the astute staff officer of the Wehrmacht noticed a crack in the relationship between Hitler and some of the generals of the highest rank.

The opposition to the Fuhrer's grandiose aggressive plans against Czechoslovakia was led by the Chief of the General Staff of the German Land Forces, General Ludwig Beck.

This was exactly the same person who, back in 1930, being a regiment commander,

in every possible way

supported the National Socialists and then supported Hitler's rise to power. Now, having worked for a sufficient time in

the highest body of control of the ground forces of Germany and having well understood the situation, he became much more restrained and cautious. In particular, he believed that only the lack of strategic raw materials would not allow

Germany to win a big war in which England, France, the United States and the Soviet Union could act as enemies of Germany.

Beck frankly wrote about this in his memorandum, which he immediately handed over to the commander-in-chief of the ground forces and immediate superior, General V. von Brauchitsch. At the same time, he warned that a number of generals, if the Fuhrer ignored this note, were ready to resign.

Brauchitsch delivered the Beck memorandum to Hitler. But the Fuhrer reacted to him very simply. Instead of listening to the objections of the rebellious generals, on August 10 he invited their deputies to his residence at the Berghof and delivered a fiery speech to them. But even during this meeting, Hitler was not supported by all the generals. This was the last meeting at which the Führer allowed the military to ask questions and discuss his decisions.

From now on, Hitler firmly took all power in the army into his iron hands.

One of the first to break down was Brauchitsch, who at that time was divorcing his first wife and seeking permission to marry a certain Charlotte Schmidt. Realizing that his personal life depended on the support of the Fuhrer, he did not find any other solution than

curl

Hitler: "I am a soldier. My duty is to obey." So did many other generals.

Beck realized that he was defeated because of the unscrupulousness of his associates, and on August 18, 1938, he resigned. Hitler accepted her, but did everything possible to ensure that the reason for the resignation did not become

known abroad. Beck himself also did not show much activity. As a result, the fact of changing the chiefs of the general staff of the German ground forces was kept secret from the world community until October 1938. Beck's successor as chief of the general staff of the ground forces was the fifty-four-year-old General Franz Halder.

Beck's hopes in 1938 had their foundation. F. Halder shared the convictions of his boss and helped him in every possible way. And, becoming the chief of the general staff, F.

Halder

did not cease to be critical of what the Fuhrer proposed. From his sources, Hitler knew about this, but he was forced to put up with the presence of F. Halder solely because of his high professionalism, which the Fuhrer needed so much to implement his aggressive plans.

Opposition to Hitler, who was pushing Germany into war, began to take shape as early as 1936. One of the first to resist the Fuhrer was Leipzig Mayor Karl Goerdeller, who decided to break with Nazism because of its anti-Semitism and feverish armament policy. He was then joined by the Prussian finance minister

Johannes Popitz and Reichsbank President Dr. Schacht. Subsequently, other influential persons in Germany also joined the opposition.

In 1938, some generals also joined the ranks of the opposition. In addition to F. Halder, it included the commander of the third military district, which included Berlin and adjacent territories, General Erwin von Witzleben, the head of the Potsdam garrison, General Erich von Brokdorf-Ahlefeld, and the commander of a tank division located in Thuringia,

General Erich Goepner. The conspirators went so far as to draw up a plan to remove Hitler from

authorities immediately after he gave the order to attack Czechoslovakia. But the concession to Hitler by England and France prevented the implementation of this plan.

Nurturing anti-Hitler plans, at the same time, F. Halder, as chief of the general staff, continued to work on planning a military operation to invade Czechoslovakia and, as X-day approached, he became more and more interested in this work. Spurred on and constant control by the Fuhrer.

On September 9, 1938, Hitler summoned Keitel, Brauchitsch and Halder to Nuremberg for a meeting that began at 10 pm and ended at 4 am. This meeting was very stormy. F. Halder found himself in a very delicate position. He, the main conspirator against Hitler, had to report in detail to the Fuhrer the plan of attack

on

Czechoslovakia. At the same time, Hitler constantly reproached Halder and Brauchitsch for cowardice and inability to direct the preparation of the operation.

But even after visiting Nuremberg, Halder continued to work against Hitler's aggressive plans. In order to study the situation in more depth, he instructed an Abwehr officer, Colonel Oster, to constantly inform him about political steps.

Fuhrer and, through reliable people, warned the leaders of England and France about the preparations for an invasion of Czechoslovakia. Then he met with Schacht and once again specified in detail the plan of action against Hitler.

The coup was scheduled for September 13, 1938, immediately after Hitler returned to Berlin from the party congress held in Nuremberg. But the Fuhrer, as if sensing danger, did not return to Berlin, but went first to Munich, and then to Berchtesgaden, where he was supposed to meet with the British Prime Minister.

Then the date of the putsch was moved to 28 September. Later, in his testimony at the Nuremberg trials, F. Halder said the following on this issue: "At noon on 26

On September Witzleben came into my office. We discussed the state of affairs. He wanted me to give the order to act.

We discussed how long he would need, etc. During our conversation, news came that the British Prime Minister and the French

Prime Minister had agreed to come to Hitler for further negotiations. Then I canceled the order, as the news received

deprived our plan of any meaning ... "

Thus, Hitler's political victory in relation to Czechoslovakia not only saved him from overthrow by the generals, but also greatly increased the Fuhrer's authority in the eyes of the German people and the Wehrmacht. The ideological ground was cut out from under the feet of Brauchitsch, Halder and other conspirators, and Hitler's supporters received new trump

cards

v

your hands. These days, General Jodl wrote in his diary: "The Fuhrer, with his genius and determination, which was not shaken even by the danger of a world war, again won without the use of force. It remains to believe that those who did not believe in his genius are now defeated forever.

At 6 am on March 15, German troops entered the territory of Bohemia and Moravia. They were not resisted. By the evening of the same day, A. Hitler triumphantly arrived in

Prague. Czechoslovakia ceased to exist as an independent state.

Poland was next. At the end of November 1938, A. Hitler demanded that the commanders of all branches of the German armed forces submit to him a plan for the invasion of Poland by January 10, 1939. Unlike the occupation of Czechoslovakia, Hitler put forward more compelling reasons for the attack on Poland - the return to Germany of the lands illegally taken from it under the Treaty of Versailles in 1918. This idea was supported

the majority of the population of Germany, as well as in the army.

Preparations began for the operation, which received the code name "Weiss". The commanders-in-chief of the branches of the armed forces were supposed to submit their plans for the operation to the Fuhrer by | May 1939. But the development of the plan for a military operation against Polypi was entrusted to a small group of OKW officers, and not to the General Staff of the German Ground Forces, since Hitler believed that "otherwise, one should not talk about its complete secrecy."

Only after the approval of this plan did work begin at the headquarters of the branches of the armed forces. This time, F. Halder and his assistants conscientiously worked on this document. The chief of the general staff was clearly attracted by the idea of being involved

To

such large-scale and significant historical cases, where he could fully demonstrate his military talent.

On June 22, 1939, the Reich Defense Council was created under the chairmanship of G. Goering. F. Halder became a member of it and, among the thirty-five senior officials of Germany, was present at its first meeting. Now he no longer dared to contradict the Fuhrer or express any of his doubts. The huge German war machine was already in full swing, and it was pointless to resist this mechanism.

At dawn on September 1, 1939, the German army crossed the border of Poland and moved towards Warsaw. The Second World War began, and the implementation of the military operation plan developed by F. Halder began.

On September 4, the battle ended with the formation of the 4th Army of General von Kluge, advancing from Pomerania, with the troops of the 3rd Army, under the command of General von Kluchner, advancing from East Prussia in a westerly direction. It was in this battle that General G. Guderian's tank group first distinguished itself.

The next day, Halder had a conversation with the generals Brauchitsch and the commander of Army Group North von Bock, during which they all came to the same conclusion - the enemy was defeated. But in practice, the hostilities between the German and Polish troops continued for more than two weeks, and they ended with the victory of the Wehrmacht and the entry of Soviet troops into the regions of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine.

During the Polish campaign, F. Halder was already fully imbued with a warlike spirit and rooted with all his heart for the results of the actions of the German army. At this time, he practically renounces his former anti-Hitler convictions and begins to conscientiously work for the result. He regards the political concessions to the Soviet Union by the Berlin leadership as a shame, but agrees to the transfer

"our

troops of all important objects to the Russian troops. As a result of this campaign, Halder himself was awarded the Iron Cross 1st Class, and shortly thereafter received the Knight's Cross.

On September 25, 1939, in a narrow circle of senior officers, A. Hitler revealed his plan for a war against France. Two days later, at a meeting with the Fuhrer, a general analysis of the situation that had developed in Europe after the defeat of Poland was carried out, and new tasks were identified. F. Halder, who was present at this meeting, wrote in his diary: "If only the requirements of reason are taken into account, then the war should not be continued. Arguments are for it. It is dangerous to take this hope as reality in advance. It is not reason that dictates, but the interests of the country, questions of prestige. They are difficult to evaluate. Get used to the idea that the war continues.

After this meeting, F. Halder clarified in detail the upcoming task, the capabilities of the Wehrmacht, determined the prospects for the further development of the German armed forces and began

detailed preparations for the next aggression against France. But since this country

the side of Germany was covered by the Maginot line of fortified areas, it was decided to advance around this line through Belgium and Holland.

On October 14, Brauchitsch and Halder met to discuss the situation and work out a common course of action. Aggression against Belgium and Holland was very alarming to Halder, who believed that Germany was not ready for a big war on

west. He even once again raised the issue of the need to eliminate the Fuhrer. But the weak-willed Brauchitsch protested, believing that this measure would greatly weaken Germany. He only offered to explain to the Fuhrer in more detail the complexity of the situation and warn him of the possible consequences. But Hitler did not want to listen to his general, repeating that the British would yield only after tangible blows in the west.

Once again, the question of a conspiracy arose. But this time, not a single reliable military unit was at the disposal of the conspirators. In addition, they all sincerely feared that the elimination of Hitler would cause unrest in Germany, which the Western countries would be able to use to their advantage. Therefore, they decided to temporarily limit more

close

cooperation with the British and not take more decisive steps against Hitler. Both Halder and Brauchitsch in this situation showed a clear organizational weakness, bordering on cowardice.

On November 8, in the evening in a Munich pub, where Hitler delivered his traditional speech in commemoration of the "beer putsch", a bomb exploded, planted in a column behind the podium. But the explosion occurred just as the Führer and other important Nazi leaders had already left the pub. It is still unclear whether this was an attempt on the life of the leader of the German people or a well-planned action by the Nazi secret services. On November 21, Himmler publicly stated that there had been a plot to assassinate Hitler in a Munich pub, and that the explosion had been prepared at the instigation of the British secret service. Thus, the suspicion of this case of the generals' opposition was officially removed.

Having escaped death from an assassination attempt (or imitation of it) in order to suppress the resistance of the opposition of the generals, A. Hitler gathered the highest ranks of the Wehrmacht in his office on November 23.

F. Halder attended this meeting. Going to a meeting with Hitler, he feared that he would be accused of opposing the plans of the Führer. But this did not happen. Hitler deliberately evaded this topic, realizing that the experience of the generals was more important for him,

how fighting them. Halder and Brauchitsch no longer objected and only asked for a postponement of the offensive by a few days in order to better prepare the operation. In his diary, he wrote: "The Commander-in-Chief and I are "imbued with the spirit of Zossen." (Critical day!) The timing of the onset must be postponed, if possible, by three days.

On November 23, at six o'clock in the evening, A. Hitler again invited Brauchitsch and Halder to his place. He read a moral to the commander-in-chief, and kept the chief of the general staff of the ground forces for about half an hour in the reception room, like a delinquent boy. The Führer accused the High Command of the Ground Forces of defeatist moods, and Halder that he "shows stubbornness that prevents him from joining the Führer and supporting him." The humiliated Brauchitsch, according to his testimony given later at Nuremberg, offered his resignation, but Hitler did not accept it.

The day of November 23, 1939 was in many ways a milestone in the development of events. It marked the decisive victory of A. Hitler over the army, which during the First World War overthrew Emperor Wilhelm II and assumed the highest political and military power in Germany. In particular, he warned Halder that he would destroy anyone who stood in his way and crush any opposition from the General Staff "from all over."

cruelty."

In the period from April 9 to May 5, 1940, Operation Weserübung (Teachings on the Weser) was carried out to capture Denmark and Holland. The Germans lost during this operation 1,317 people killed, 16,064 wounded and 2,375 missing. The losses of the Norwegians, French and British amounted to less than 5 thousand people.

During this operation, the German fleet was especially active. Ground forces were involved only in part. Naturally, all the glory went to the sailors, and Halder

in his soul he was hurt, considering this distrust on the part of the Fuhrer. Two people constantly fought in it - the general staff officer and the conspirator, and when questions related to professional knowledge, the first always defeated the second.

F. Halder tried to prove himself during the operation against France, which the General Staff of the German Land Forces had been developing since the end of 1939. This operation was codenamed "Gelb". It was based on the Schlieffen plan (strike on the right flank through Belgium and Northern France), and, in fact, nothing

new

did not have to be invented. But the Allies somehow became aware of this plan.

The chief of staff of Army Group A under Runstedt, General Erich Manstein, proposed a radical change in the original plan and to launch the main attack in the center, through the Ardennes, with massive armored forces. Halder was infuriated by the interference in Manstein's operational plan and secured his appointment as corps commander. But Manstein did not abandon his idea and, at the first opportunity, outlined

her

Halder. He argued that the main thrust through the Ardennes would have come where the Allies least expected it, considering this heavily rugged, wooded area unsuitable for the massive use of tanks.

F. Halder, who at first considered this idea extravagant, soon began to get used to it and work on its implementation. On February 24, an updated version of the plan was approved.

But first, Hitler decided to carry out the occupation of Holland. A plan was developed, which began to be implemented on May 10, 1940. German armed forces on the signal "Danzig" rushed across the Belgian border.

But F. Halder was again on the sidelines of the victory podium. The point was that G.

Goering, at a decisive moment, suggested to the Fuhrer that the Luftwaffe forces destroy the encircled group alone, and Hitler agreed with this. But on June 26 the Fuhrer

suddenly

ordered the troops to stop and allowed the British to begin the evacuation of their units from Dunkirk to England. On May

27 they took out 7.7 thousand people, on May 28 - 17.8 thousand, on May 29 - 47.3 thousand, on May 30 - 53.8 thousand people.

On June 5, 1940, the Germans launched a massive attack on the Somme against the French. Soon they were advancing along the entire 450-kilometer front, stretching from Abbeville to the Upper Rhine. The French were doomed. With 143 German divisions, including 10 panzer divisions, they were able to oppose only 65 divisions, most of them second-rate, because the best formations and armored forces were defeated in Belgium. Little has survived from the low-powered French Air Force. The British could help their allies with only one infantry division and part of a tank division.

On June 10, the French government left Paris. On June 11, Italy entered the war on the side of Germany. On June 14, German troops solemnly entered Paris. Soon France capitulated. On June 22, a document was signed in Compiègne on the surrender of France.

Preparations began for Operation Sea Lion against England. The idea of this operation was developed by A. Hitler's inner circle, and F. Halder only

received the corresponding tasks. But in practice, with the implementation of this operation, there were delays. On June 3, in his diary, F. Halder speaks for the first time about the need for "a strike against Russia in order to force her to recognize the dominant role of Germany in Europe."

Thus, I.V. Stalin and A. Hitler, using the possibilities of power, quickly came to a one-man dictatorship, subjugating all the institutions of power in the USSR and Germany, simultaneously cracking down on former allies who became dangerous on the way to absolute power.

At the same time, on the way to dictatorship, both leaders did everything possible for the rapid development and strengthening of their state. The economic rise of the USSR and Germany in the 1930s had no analogue in the modern history of mankind. It is noteworthy that it simultaneously took place in many directions and was carried out within the framework of

unified state plan.

Both Germany and the USSR were not opposed to the expansion of the territory and the solution of other tasks by military means. But A. Hitler, unlike I.V. Stalin, spoke frankly about their aggressive plans and prepared the armed forces for aggression. Soviet Union in words led peace-loving policy without actually renouncing the use of military force.

## On the edge of Siegfried's sword

Germany, still at the level of disparate principalities, was preparing for a major war of conquest in order to win a leading position in Europe. The theory of "total" (complete, comprehensive) war had already begun to be developed at the beginning of the twentieth century

German military theorist K. Clausewitz (1780-1871). Then E. Ludendorff (1865-1937) dealt with this problem. The main content of this theory was the preparation and conduct of an aggressive war, providing for the subordination of all spheres of the material and spiritual life of society to its interests, as well as the conduct of hostilities.

with

the use of any, the most severe means of struggle for the purpose of mass destruction by the aggressor of both the armed forces and the civilian population of the countries that were attacked. A. Hitler already at the very beginning of his political career firmly relied on the theory of "total" war.

At the beginning of the 20th century, A. von Schlieffen's (1833-1913) theory of "blitzkrieg" appeared. The content of this theory was to achieve the complete defeat of the enemy's armed forces in one sudden blow without declaring war, in the course of one fleeting campaign, before the enemy was able to mobilize and deploy his armed forces. A. Hitler also quickly adopted this theory, saying one day at a gathering of his supporters: "History itself has set great tasks for the German people: to push the boundaries of the state and prove the superiority of the German nation over others. To this end, we have to dig up Siegfried's smashing sword and suddenly strike at the enemies, where and when they least expect him. At the same time, I see that fate itself shows us the way to the east.



Indirectly, Germany began preparations for war against the USSR almost immediately after A. Hitler came to power in 1933 with a rapid increase in military production and the strengthening of the army. The Fuhrer personally supervised this process.

Directly planning the military operations of the German troops against the USSR began in the summer of 1940. It is known that on June 25, 1940, at the headquarters of A. Hitler,

discussion of a variant of the plan for subsequent military operations "Strike force to the east". This

the same idea was reflected in the discussion of new tasks on June 28. And on July 21, the commander-in-chief of the German ground forces, Field Marshal W. Brauchitsch, received A. Hitler's oral order to develop a plan for the war in the east, moreover, A. Hitler for the first time ordered "to deal with the Russian problem",

thereby accurately defining the object of future aggression.

A small group of military specialists immediately began to carry out this task. Subsequently, the discussion of this issue at Hitler's headquarters was constantly ongoing, and it became more and more clear-cut. The stake was made on the success of the blitzkrieg.

The development of the concept of the operation was completed by the fact that on the evening of December 18, 1940, A. Hitler signed the directive of the Wehrmacht High Command No. 21, better known

How

Plan Barbarossa. It was so secret that only nine copies were made, of which three were handed over to the

commanders-in-chief of the ground forces, air force and navy, and six were locked in the safe of the main headquarters of the high command. The idea was based on all the most advanced principles of warfare at that time,

tested by the German command on the experience of conducting military operations in the West.

It was very important for A. Hitler to know that the Soviet government did not suspect anything about the aggressive plans of Germany. Therefore, the next day, December 19, at 12

A. Hitler arranged an official reception for the Soviet ambassador to Germany V. G. Dekanozov on the occasion of his assumption of this position, although the ambassador had already been in Berlin for about a month and was waiting for an appointment to present his credentials. The reception lasted 35 minutes. Hitler was amiable with the Soviet ambassador, he did not skimp on compliments. He even apologized that, under wartime conditions, he could not receive V. G. Dekanozov earlier. Hitler, skillfully acting out a scene of mutual trust

and understanding between Germany and the USSR, assured the ambassador that his country had no claims against the Soviet Union. At the time when V. G. Dekanozov was talking peacefully with Hitler, right there, in the imperial office, as well as in the ministry of I. Ribbentrop and in the headquarters of V. Keitel, intense secret work had already

begun to prepare plans for a war against the USSR.

In parallel with the development of the strategic concept of the operation, the intelligence of the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces was constantly strengthened. At the very beginning of January 1941, the head of the Department of Foreign Armies of the East of the General Staff of the Wehrmacht Ground Forces, Lieutenant Colonel E. Kinzel, presented his superiors with a report on the political and moral stability of the Soviet Union and the combat power of the Red Army. In it, he points out that after the end of the war with Finland, a qualitative restructuring of the Red Army was launched. In his opinion, "all these measures should ensure a gradual

improvement of the Red Army in all areas of service. At the same time, the author concludes that the work on reforming the Red Army is proceeding rather slowly and that "in Russia, the fruits of new methods will become tangible only in a few years, if not decades. In the near future, serious differences in the quality of troops will arise everywhere. Units under the supervision of energetic high-ranking warlords will soon achieve shifts in knowledge and combat capability. But the large provincial contingents of the army will only improve at a slow pace. The Russian natural character, heaviness, schematism, fear of making independent decisions, of responsibility will not change.

Commanders of all levels in the near future will not yet be able to quickly command large modern formations and their elements. Both now and in the near future, in major offensive operations, they will hardly be able to use

favorable environment for swift strikes, to show initiative within the framework of the overall task set by the command.

A. Hitler decided to make the most of the time factor and commit aggression against the USSR before all the measures for the reorganization of the Red Army were completed. On January 31, 1941, he signed a directive on the strategic deployment of troops under the Barbarossa plan. It formulated the goals of this action, highlighted the position of Soviet troops in the European part of the USSR, revealed the plan for the upcoming operation, set tasks for army groups, aviation and the navy. Four months were allotted for the implementation of strategic deployment measures. The directive was sent to all commanders of army groups, tank groups and army commanders.

The most important feature of strategic deployment was that mobilization in its direct sense was not carried out. The build-up of the grouping was carried out consistently during the hostilities of the Second World War and under its cover. So, if in May 1940 the number of German armed forces was 5.45 million people, then by June 1941 it had increased to 7.25 million people. The number of divisions increased from 156 to 210, divisions that had received combat experience in the west were advanced to the east, and mainly newly formed divisions intended for occupation service and combat coordination were sent to the west.

A. Hitler constantly reminded his generals that the success of the upcoming operation would largely depend on the suddenness of its start. In order to conceal the ongoing

events On February 15, the headquarters of the German High Command issued a special "Directive on Disinformation". In accordance with this directive, at the first stage (until April 1941), the concentration and deployment of German troops under the Barbarossa plan was to be explained as an exchange of forces between

West and East Germany and the pulling up of echelons for Operation Mirita to invade Yugoslavia. In the second stage (from April to the invasion of the USSR), the strategic deployment was portrayed as the greatest disinformation maneuver, which was allegedly carried out in order to divert attention from the preparations for the invasion of England. It is quite clear that such a disinformation operation could be successful only if the work of Soviet intelligence in Germany was completely paralyzed, and, apparently, there were reasons for this.

In the winter and spring of 1941, preparations for an attack on the USSR took on an ever wider scope and embraced ever new levels of the military command and control apparatus. V. Brauchitsch and F. Halder had continuous meetings, to which the commanders-in-chief of groups of troops and their staff chiefs were called every now and then. Representatives of the Finnish, Romanian and Hungarian armies arrived one after another. At the headquarters of the army groups

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In February-March, military games were held, at which the actions of the troops and the order of organizing their supply were played out in stages. Big war game with chief

of the General Staff of F. Halder, commanders and chiefs of staff of the armies was held at the headquarters of Army Group A (South) in Saint-Germain (near Paris). The actions of Guderian's tank group were played separately. Only after such a thorough check and refinement of the plans of army groups and individual armies on March 17, 1941, were they reported to Hitler.

In | On March 30, 1941, a large meeting was held with A. Hitler, records of which are contained in the diary of the Chief of the General Staff of the German Ground Forces, Colonel-General F. Halder, there are abstract notes on the strengths and weaknesses of the Red Army.

At this meeting, Hitler showed good knowledge of the upcoming enemy. In his opinion, Soviet tanks "deserve respect." Hitler remarked that

The Red Army has "good heavy tanks", but there are few of them, and the rest in their mass are obsolete types. He further pointed out that in terms of the number of tanks, the Russians are the strongest in the world, "however, they have only a small number of new giant tanks with a long-barreled 105-mm cannon (colossus tanks weighing 42-45 tons). Russian aviation is great

in number, but many of its aircraft are of obsolete types, and only a small number are

modern machines."

Next, the Fuhrer moved on to discuss issues of military art. He noted that the main problems are related to the size of the territory of the Soviet Union, and said that "the vast expanses make it necessary to concentrate forces in decisive areas, massive use of aircraft and tanks in decisive areas. Aviation cannot handle this gigantic area at the same time. At the beginning of the war, it must establish dominance only in certain sections of this colossal front. Therefore, it must be used in close connection with the operations of the ground forces. The Russians will not withstand the massive attacks of tanks and aircraft.

In the afternoon of the same day, another meeting was held with A. Hitler, at which, among others, Operation Barbarossa was also discussed. This time, the commanders of the army groups, as well as General Guderian, reported their plans. Hitler listened attentively to all the reports and asked a number of clarifying questions. Later, the generals present at the meeting noted that for many of them the depth that the Fuhrer showed in a number of purely specific military issues was unexpected.

On April 7, at the request of A. Hitler, a directive was sent to the commander of the German occupation forces in Norway on the tasks of the German and Finnish troops in the war against the USSR. It set tasks for the defense of the Petsamo region, where

deposits of minerals, as well as the mastery of a number of Soviet territories, primarily the port of Murmansk and the Khanko Peninsula.

"We must fully secure ourselves in the North and cut off Russia from ports through which she can communicate with the outside world," said the Fuhrer. - The Finns have already proved their ability to tie down significant forces of the Red

Army with skillful defense. I do not count on them especially when solving offensive tasks. Let them at least cover the flanks of our divisions.

On April 26, General F. Halder reported to A. Hitler that since the beginning of the month there had been an increase in the grouping of Soviet troops in the west of the Soviet Union by ten divisions. At the same time, he noted that "the

increase in the number of troops in the west of Russia due to the arrival of ten new divisions is most noticeable in the areas of Bialystok and Lvov. In the rear of the front, pulled up to the very border, there are four tank groups of different numbers. They are located in Bessarabia, in the Zhitomir region and to the west, as well as near Vilnius and Pskov.

A. Hitler listened attentively to the report, without taking his eyes off the map, after which he remarked: "By these actions, the Russians themselves are driving their forces into places where we can

their

smash with a few counter blows. We will not storm strong defenses at the beginning of the war, but will try to find a weak point in it in order to penetrate deeper faster. I propose to increase the concentration of forces in selected areas, primarily tank divisions.

The next time the issue of conducting military operations under the Barbarossa plan was considered at the General Staff of the German Ground Forces in the presence of A. Hitler on April 30. Then the balance of forces

and means of the parties was clarified, and

Also

a forecast was made for the upcoming frontier battles, especially in the "South" zone of the armies. At the end of the

meeting, the Fuhrer said: "Russia has acted unfriendly with us several times, so we must protect ourselves from any surprises on her part. At that

same

time I propose to speed up our preparations. I think that approximately the offensive can be launched on May 23rd.

But then at a meeting with the head of the country's defense department of the headquarters of the supreme command of the Wehrmacht from | May 1941, A. Hitler postponed the date of the start of the war against the USSR to June 22. At the same time, assessing the implementation of the Barbarossa plan, the commander-in-chief of the German ground forces, General V. Brauchitsch, suggested that fierce border battles would last up to four weeks. "In the further course of operations, one can only count on weaker resistance," he concluded.

A. Hitler made every effort to explain the upcoming war between Germany and the Soviet Union as a vital necessity. Yes, May 2, 1941

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appendix to the order in connection with the upcoming hostilities in the East, the commander of the 4th Panzer Group, General E. Hoepner, wrote: "The war against Russia is the most important part of the struggle for the existence of the German people ... This struggle should pursue the goal of turning today's Russia into ruins, and so she should

carried out with unheard-of cruelty. Each fight must be organized and carried out

with  
iron will, aimed at the ruthless and complete destruction of the enemy ... "

On the same day, A. Hitler convened a meeting of members of the economic headquarters "East" under the German government, which discussed the future use of the occupied regions of the USSR. The intentions of A. Hitler and his entourage were very tough. In the decisions of this meeting, in particular, it was written:

"It will be possible to continue the war only if all the armed forces of Germany in the third year of the war (the second half of 1941. - Auth.) Are supplied with food at the expense of Russia. At the same time, there is no doubt: if we manage to pump out everything that we need from the country, then tens of millions of people will be doomed to starvation ... "

May 31, 1941. A. Hitler authorized the flights of German aircraft

reconnaissance aviation along the eastern border with the aim of additional reconnaissance of the grouping of Soviet troops and obtaining other intelligence data.

June 7, 1941. A. Hitler once again stipulates the terms and procedure for Finland to enter the war against the USSR, and also specifies the main directions of attacks by the Finnish troops.

June 10, 1941. At Hitler's headquarters, a report was heard on the preparation of intelligence (Abwehr) for the operation under the Barbarossa plan. Admiral Canaris reported that in this

plan

already done and what his department intends to do after the start of hostilities. A.

Hitler, after listening to the report, noted:

"The ultimate depth of Soviet territory must be constantly monitored by our people. Use all possibilities. I think that you will have plenty of human material. It is necessary to immediately use everything for our purposes.

June 13, 1941. At Hitler's headquarters, the question is discussed of how to explain to the troops the need for an attack on the Soviet Union, as well as the time for the start of hostilities (at 3

hours 30 minutes or at dawn). In addition, the Fuhrer hears reports on inspection trips of representatives of the General Staff of the Ground Forces to formations intended to participate in the Barbarossa plan.

June 14, 1941. A. Hitler is having a big meeting at which the commanders of army groups, armies and tank groups report to the Fuhrer on their readiness for the upcoming actions under the Barbarossa plan. At this meeting arose

disagreements about what difficulties the German command would face in the course of the encirclement of Soviet troops in the Bialystok region. As a result, a number of operational issues were clarified, and it was also decided to launch an offensive at three in the morning.

June 17-19, 1941. On the orders of A. Hitler, General F. Halder traveled to Romania to coordinate some details of the operation with the start of the war against the USSR.

June 20, 1941. In the evening, the General Staff received A. Hitler's appeal to the troops about the start of the war against the USSR.

June 21, 1941. F. Halder reports to A. Hitler on the balance of forces and means of the parties before the start of the war against the USSR. According to this report, against 213 Soviet divisional formations, Germany has 141 formations. The general notes

What

Germany almost doubles the Soviet Union in the number of tank divisions, but is almost three times inferior in the number of mechanized brigades and absolutely in the number of cavalry divisions.

"That's normal," the Fuhrer sums up. - The time of cavalry is long gone, now is the time of tanks. At the sight of our tanks, the Russian infantry will scatter. The main thing is pressure and speed. Goering's aircraft will clear the way for you. Your job is to quickly use the results of her blows, and success is guaranteed.

But the most important thing is different. The decision is made, the machine is running, and there is no need to change anything lately. Our task is to do everything possible so that the decisions made are implemented.

We will talk

about how this happens tomorrow.

So, preparations for the start of the war between Germany and the Soviet Union by June 21, 1941 were completed successfully. In a relatively short time, with observance of camouflage measures, it was possible to deploy a powerful group of troops near the eastern border, develop operational plans for its actions, and provide everything necessary. In addition, issues with the allies and the replenishment of troops with reserves were resolved. It only remained to give the last command so that this huge military machine would set in motion and begin to fulfill the tasks assigned to it.

Undoubtedly, the role of A. Hitler in the preparation and implementation of this work was enormous. He was one of the main initiators of the German war against the Soviet Union, actively participated in the development of the Barbarossa plan. Subsequently, the Fuhrer closely and in detail monitored the implementation of this plan. It would be wrong to say

What

Hitler personally carried out the development of a plan for a military operation - this is not

duty of the head of state. But he knew all the basic principles of his

And

understood the strategic relationship between them, which made it possible to link the actions of heterogeneous and disparate forces and means into a single whole.

If tomorrow is war...

Today, no one doubts that in the 1930s the Soviet Union, and therefore I.V. Stalin prepared for war. This was evident in everything - from the creation of a powerful military-industrial complex of the country to the paramilitary training

of pre-conscription youth. At the same time, on the whole, it is impossible to talk about preparations for war as the only main direction of the Soviet state policy of that period.

Since 1938, work has been actively carried out in the USSR to implement the third five-year plan for the development of the national economy of the country. The implementation of this plan was the main concern of I. V. Stalin

and his inner circle. The results of this work were more than impressive. By the end of the 1930s, the Soviet Union had a huge economic base of its own, independent of the economies of other countries.

In the last pre-war years, there was a constant increase in production

industrial products. If in the country in 1939 17.6 million tons  
steel and produced 30.3 million tons of oil, then in 1940 18.3 million

tons of steel and produced 31.1 million tons of oil. In addition, in the last pre-war year, the USSR mined 165.9 million tons of coal, produced 14.9

million tons of pig iron, 48.3 billion kilowatts of electricity, and produced 145,500 motor vehicles (136,000 trucks). In general, the gross output

of the entire industry of the country by that time, compared with 1913, increased by 8.5 times.

At the same time, the minimum amount of funds produced was allocated for the production of consumer goods and the satisfaction of the urgent needs of the Soviet people. The spirit of war constantly hovered over the country, and defense issues were given priority. The preparation of the USSR for a future war took place simultaneously with the solution of many other tasks by the country, and was carried out in several specific areas. The main ones are: the rearmament of the Red Army, the development of the branches of the Armed Forces and the branches of service, the change in the organizational structure of the main military formations, the equipment of the theater of the upcoming military operations, the conduct of personnel policy in the army and navy.

At the same time, it must be admitted that in the third five-year plan for the development of the national economy of the Soviet Union, the issues of building the Red Army were spelled out in a special line. The plan for the construction of the Red Army was every time considered and adopted at the level of the Central Committee of the Party and the Soviet government, therefore, its preparation was taken very seriously. All departments of the General Staff took part in this work, then the document was submitted to the

People's Commissariat of Defense, where

same

carefully worked out. M. V. Zakharov writes: "After approval by the Politburo of the Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars, all the most important planning documents of the General Staff were always signed by several responsible persons. JV Stalin strictly adhered to the established order, and such documents were not signed by him alone. And this time, on the title page of the third five-year plan for the construction of the Red Army, there were signatures in red "for" - I. Stalin, K. Voroshilov and others.

The plan for the development of the Red Army provided, first of all, an increase in the production of defense products. On the basis of the great economic achievements of the USSR in the late 1930s, the defense industry received significant development. If during 1938-1940 the annual increase in the production of all products of the national economy of the USSR averaged 13%, then defense products - 32%. Thanks to this, 2.9 thousand tanks and 10.3 thousand aircraft were produced in the Soviet Union in 1939, 2.7 thousand tanks and 10.6 thousand aircraft in 1940, until June 1, 1941 -

1.5 thousand tanks and 5 thousand aircraft. In general, the number of the main types of weapons of the Red Army from 1939 to 1941 increased: artillery pieces - from 34.2 to 91.4 thousand, tanks - from 10 to 20.6 thousand, aircraft - from 5.5 to 20.6 thousand units.

In parallel with the rearmament of the Red Army, significant organizational and staffing measures were taking place in order to increase the combat capabilities of the troops.

The entire territory of the USSR was divided into military districts, on the basis of which, in the event

war provided for the deployment of fronts. Each district could contain from three to five combined arms armies, as well as formations (units) directly subordinate to the commander of the district. Directly on the western border were the troops of the Leningrad, Baltic Special, Western Special, Kyiv Special and Odessa districts.

The first operational unit of the Red Army was the armies. Each army included one or two rifle corps, separate rifle and cavalry divisions, and, as a rule, one mechanized corps. In addition, to support the actions of ground forces, the army commander could be assigned one or two aviation divisions, artillery units of the RGC and fortified areas located in their zone of operations.

The command of the Red Army was well aware that even the most advanced weapons would not be able to solve problems in a future war without human participation. It has been expressed before  
Total

in increasing the number of the Red Army. By the beginning of 1938, the strength of the Armed Forces of the USSR had been increased to 1 million 433 thousand people. On September 1, 1939, the country adopted the Law on universal conscription. By the beginning of 1941, the strength of the Red Army

And

The navy has reached 4.2 million people. On June 22, under arms as part of

The Armed Forces of the USSR were already 5 million people. Of this number, the Ground Forces accounted for 80.6%, the Air Force - 8.6%, the Navy - 7.3%, and the Air Defense Forces - 3.3%. In addition, numerous reserves were prepared. At that time, the level of specialization of the reservists was not very high. We proceeded from the fact that more than 1.4 million tractor drivers and car drivers work on collective farms alone, who could quickly be transferred to combat vehicles if necessary. Throughout the country, pilots, radio operators, paratroopers, infantrymen-shooters were trained in the Osoaviakhim system.

Thus, there is no doubt that in the late 30s - early 40s  
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years, the economy and the military-industrial complex of the Soviet Union were aimed at the inevitability of an imminent big war. This explains the rapid development of the military-industrial complex of the country, the development of numerous new models of weapons and military equipment, their mass production and introduction into the troops. True, the latter often did not have time to qualitatively master new samples. They also did not have time to create a repair base for these new samples. There was no longer any doubt about the aggressive plans of fascist Germany and its allies. The Soviet Union was preparing for a war with a powerful enemy and was materially ready for this fight.

The most important component of the preparation of the USSR for a future war in the West was the preliminary equipment of the theater of military operations.

In the late 1930s, B. M. Shaposhnikov, appointed to the post of Chief of the General Staff after the arrest of Marshal of the Soviet Union A. E. Yegorov, continued the work of his predecessor in equipping a line of fortified areas along the western border of the USSR, which separated the Soviet Union from the dependent on Romania, Bessarabia, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia and Finland. Work on the construction of these fortified areas, with the approval of I. V. Stalin and the Politburo, was carried out from the end of the 20s, and by the end of 1939 a lot had been done.



In total, on the old border of the USSR in 1928-1937. 12 fortified regions were built: Karelsky, Kingiseppsky, Pskov, Polotsk, Minsk, Mozyr, Korostensky, Novograd-Volynsky, Letichevsky, Mogilev-Yampolsky, Rybnitsky,

Tiraspol. Another one - Kiev UR - was erected 250 km from the border to cover the capital of Ukraine.

By decision of the Soviet government in 1938 and 1939. the second stage of the construction of fortified areas began. Trying to increase the density of fortified areas on western border, the Soviet government in 1938-1939. the construction of 8 more fortified regions began: Kamenets-

Podolsky, Izyaslavsky, Ostrovsky, Ostropolsky, Sebezhsky, Slutsky, Starokonstantinovsky, Shepetovsky. - At the same time, the improvement of the already built fortified areas continued. The number of firing structures of various types grew, obstacles intensified, and the number of minefields grew. To strengthen the anti-tank defense, artillery pieces were installed in the pillboxes, and the protective properties of long-term structures were strengthened. A large amount of work was carried out in them - 1028 structures were concreted.

The liberation campaigns pushed the USSR border to the west, and by the end of 1939, further construction of fortified areas on the former border became inexpedient. A new problem arose - the strengthening of the new state borders of the Soviet Union. At the same time, it was necessary to use developments in this matter as efficiently as possible, what to do with the newly built, but no longer "necessary" long-term fortifications, how to use trained personnel to build fortified areas, how to form their garrisons?

The changed foreign policy conditions forced the country's leadership to reconsider priorities and forced them to shift their efforts to the construction of new fortifications from

different border configuration. The result was the third stage of the construction of fortifications

construction (additional equipment) in 1940-1941 of twenty fortified areas on the new

state border of the USSR - Murmansk, Sortavalsky, Keksholmsky, Vyborgsky, Khanko, Titovsky, Siauliai, Kaunas, Alytus, Grodno, Osovets, Zambrovsky, Brest, Vladimir-Volynsky, - Strumilovsky,

Rava-Russian, Przemysl, Kovel, Upper Prut and Lower Prut. At the same time, preparations began for the construction of three more fortified regions: Danube, Odessa and Chernivtsi.

The fortified areas that were built on the new frontier differed from those that remained in the interior of the country. They were a piece of terrain equipped with a system of long-term and field fortifications, which were prepared for long-term defense by the garrisons of the URs in cooperation with the combined arms units.

And

field fill connections. The main difference was the long-term structures themselves. At the same time, the fortified areas had specific lines and depth of defense.

At the same time, the Soviet leadership did not refuse to use fortified

areas located along the old border of the USSR. Thus, the head of the Main Military Engineering Directorate of the Red Army in "Considerations on the use of fortified areas along the old western and northwestern border" noted that "the existing fortified areas should be prepared as a second fortified zone occupied by field troops for defense on a wide front." This required not only

abandonment

in fortified areas on the old state border of a certain number of troops and special equipment, but also their maintenance and service.

As practice has shown, the construction of long-term reinforced concrete structures, begun in 1940, by the beginning of the war covered no more than 30 percent of the entire length of the new western borders of the USSR. Their depth was 3-4 km. Quite large areas of the terrain remained open or covered by light field fortifications, which could not fully ensure the stability of the defense, especially

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anti-tank attitude, which created the prerequisites for their breakthrough.

On June 16, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR issued a special resolution "On accelerating the bringing to combat readiness of fortified areas." The party leadership and the country's government sought to speed up the installation of artillery and equipment

fortified areas. But, as practice has shown, some decisions were not enough. On June 22, 1942, the plan for the construction of long-term

fortifications in fortified areas was completed by no more than 25 percent. By that time, about 2,500 reinforced concrete structures (pillboxes) had been built, but only about 1,000 of them received artillery. The rest were equipped with machine guns.

Thus, there is every reason to assert that the equipment of a possible theater of military operations along the western border of the USSR in the prewar years was mainly based on the construction of lines of fortified areas.

At the same time, it should be noted that, taking into account the entire length of the state border line, the average density of structures was low. For example, on June 1, 1941, 165 structures were built in Grodno UR, which had a length of 80 km, and only 168 were concreted in Brest UR, which was 180 km long. and along the front edge, passing along the border of the Dniester, their density was 0.4 per 1 km of the front. There were sections up to 8 km wide, on which there were no permanent structures at all, and there was no fire connection

between many of them. Therefore, calculations for a stubborn defense of fortified areas at a time when they had not yet been created or were in the process of being equipped and had low fire capabilities were not justified.

At the same time, it must be understood that the fortified areas were located in the most dangerous directions and by themselves should not have solved all the tasks of defending the country's border. They only had to serve as the basis for the field defense of the armies covering the state border, which were supposed to build their own system of defensive zones, lines and regions.

In 1937-1939, the repressed were replaced by young military leaders who did not have the proper experience in managing large military formations. This became evident during the years of military conflicts of the late 30s and during the Great Patriotic War. Thus, on the eve of the Great Patriotic War began

to form a new personnel corps of the high command of the red army. The main point of this process was the Resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of January 14, 1941 "On the Chief of the General Staff and Commanders of the Military Districts." In accordance with this resolution, General of the Army G.K. Zhukov was appointed Chief of the General Staff and Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, Lieutenant General M.P. 1st Army - Lieutenant General A. I. Eremenko. There were other appointments as well.

By the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the base of the highest personnel of the Red Army consisted of three groups of military leaders. The first is the "old guard", active participants in the Civil War. Basically, these were military figures - associates of I.V. Stalin, K.E. Voroshilov and S.M. Budyonny, especially in the 1st Cavalry Army: S.K.

Timoshenko, G.I. Kulik, O.I. Gorodovikov, I.R. Apanasenko, I.V. Tyulenev, K.A. Meretskov, E.A. Shchadenko, A.V. Khrulev, Ya.T. Cherevichenko and others.

The second group included many well-established commanders from the experience of fighting in Spain, China, on the Khalkhin Gol River, in the Soviet-Finnish war. Among them were N.G. Kuznetsov, D.G. Pavlov, G.K. Zhukov, F.I. Kuznetsov, M.P. Kirponos, V.I. Chuikov and others.

To the third group of the Soviet military elite of that time, it is legitimate to include relatively young military leaders, in the recent past, graduates of the Military Academy named after M.V. Frunze, Academy of the General Staff or Higher Academic Courses: I.S. Koneva, R.Ya. Malinovsky, A.I. Antonova, A.M. Vasilevsky, K.K. Rokossovsky, I.Kh. Bagramyan, M.V. Zakharova, L.A. Govorova, P.A. Kurochkina, V.V.

Kurasova, G.K. Malandina, L.M. Sandalova, V.D. Sokolovsky and others.

There was a big difference in the quality of training of the commanders of the Soviet and German armies. In the German army, over 85% of military leaders of the highest ranks had an academic education, 90% of officers in the company-regiment link were military graduates.

schools. In addition, almost 100% of the officers and generals of the German army received combat experience in 1939

and 1940. In the Red Army on January 1, 1941, the payroll of the command and command staff of the army and navy was 579.6 thousand people. Of this number of persons in command, 7.1% had higher education, 55.9%

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secondary, 24.6% - accelerated, 12.4% - did not have a military education. The combat experience of the Civil War, local wars of the late 30s, operations to liberate Western Belarus and Western Ukraine, the Soviet-Finnish War had about half in the Ground Forces, and in general in the Red Army - only 26% of the command and command staff.

The commanders of the troops of the western military districts had combat experience gained at different times, 89% of them had a higher military education. However, the experience of leadership of the troops of the district among the persons of this category was small and ranged from one year (Western Special Military District) to several months (Baltic and Kiev Special Military Districts).

All army commanders also had combat experience, 71% of them had higher

military education. Of the commanders of army corps, only 52% had a higher military education, of the commanders of divisions - 40%. Every second division commander was appointed to a position 2-3 months before the start of the war.

In the summer of 1940, at the training camp of the commanders of the regiments of the Red Army, it turned out that out of 225 people in this category, not one had an academic education, 25 people graduated

military schools and 200 people - junior lieutenant courses. By June 22, 1941, already 15% of regimental commanders had a higher military education, 60% - secondary, and the rest -

only accelerated training under the junior lieutenant course program.

The military events of 1939 and 1940 led to the rapid career growth of a number of Soviet military leaders. On May 7, 1940, S.K. was appointed People's Commissar of Defense. Timoshenko, who on the same day received the title of Marshal of the Soviet Union. At the same time, the highest military rank was awarded to the Chief of the General Staff B.M. Shaposhnikov and the head of the Main Artillery Directorate G.I. Sandpiper. By decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, general and admiral ranks are introduced for the commanding staff. For combined arms commanders, these were the ranks: major general, lieutenant general, colonel general, army general. The previously established title of Marshal of the Soviet Union was also consolidated. For commanders of military branches and services, general ranks were also

introduced: major general, lieutenant general, colonel general, but with the corresponding addition at the end - artillery, aviation, tank troops, communications troops, engineering troops, technical troops, quartermaster service. On June 4, by a decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, new ranks were awarded to 966

generals and 74 admirals. The ranks of army general were the first to be awarded to G.K. Zhukov, K.A. Meretskov, I.V. Tyulenev, Colonel General - I.R. Apanasenko, O.I. Gorodovikov, A.D. Loktionov, G.M. Stern, Colonel General of the Tank Forces - D.G. Pavlov, colonel-general of artillery - N.N. Voronov and V.D. Grendal, admiral - L.M. Galler, I.S. Isakov and N.G. Kuznetsov. Among the lieutenant generals were named 81 combined arms

commanders, 6 commanders of the NKVD troops, 33 lieutenant generals of military branches, major generals - 479 combined arms commanders and 375 commanders of military branches.

Thus, we can conclude that the repressions of 1937-1938. caused great harm to the country at a time when it was necessary to consolidate all its forces for a future war. Of course, it is difficult to say with certainty how the

executed marshals, army commanders, commissars and flagships of the fleet would have behaved when they met with a strong enemy? But the people nominated to replace them did not stand the test of battle: the commander of the Belarusian Special Military District G.D. Pavlov and his deputies were shot for military failures,

the commander of the Kyiv Special Military District, M. P. Kirponos, died in encirclement, destroying the troops entrusted to him, the commander of the Odessa military district, Ya. T. Cherevichenko, ended the war as commander of a rifle corps. Commander of the North-Western Front (Baltic Military District) F.I. Kuznetsov in the morning 22

June

1941 lost almost all of its aviation, which was burned at the airfields. He gave the order for the retreat of the defeated

troops and on the same day was removed by Stalin from

command. Subsequently, his name did not sound in the victorious reports of the Red Army.

Not

the famous Stalinist marshals K.E. Voroshilov, S.M. Budyonny, G.I.

Kulik, many commanders, commanders of corps and divisions.

But one should also not forget that on the eve of the Great Patriotic War, the need for personnel increased due to technical re-equipment, organizational improvement and strategic deployment of the army and navy.

In 1940 alone, seven military districts and armies, six rifle corps, 22 rifle divisions, 120 brigades and regiments were

formed in the USSR. In 1941, it was planned to have 16 directorates of military districts, one front-line directorate, 20 directorates of field armies, 62 directorates of rifle corps, 29 directorates of mechanized corps, and about 300 directorates

of divisions of ground forces. Thousands of generals and officers with the necessary knowledge and experience in

commanding troops were required to complete the command and staff personnel of these formations and formations.

Thus, the preparation of the USSR for a future war in the 30s was in full swing simultaneously in many directions. Of course, the course of this work was led by the People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff of the Red Army, but the members of the Politburo and I.V. Stalin himself were vigilantly following its results. He practiced periodic hearings of persons responsible for the state of the army and navy, attended demonstrations of new types of weapons and military equipment, and military parades. He personally delved into many personnel issues and participated in the discussion of candidates for senior command positions. All this gives full grounds for asserting that military work was one of the main directions of JV Stalin's activity and that he achieved great results in carrying out

this work. Thanks to him, in matters of defense, the Soviet Union

behind

a relatively short period of time made an unprecedented leap forward, turning militarily into one of the most powerful countries not only in Europe, but throughout the world.

"Preventive" strike of the Red Army

Some readers and even historians may notice that the unpreparedness of the USSR to repel German aggression in June 1941 was caused not by the poor quality of planning documents, but by the fact that the Soviet Union was not preparing for a defensive war, but was itself preparing aggression against Germany. I first wrote about this in

early 90s "historian" Viktor Suvorov (Rezun). Another historian Mark Solonin speaks of the same in his book June 25:

Stupidity or Aggression. Referring to archival documents, he writes that "in direct accordance with the May "considerations" of N.F. Vatutin developed and presented on June 13, 1941 a certificate "On the deployment of the Armed Forces of the USSR in the event of a war in the West" and that the strike groups of the Red Army near

the western border were deployed by June 22 in strict accordance with the plan

on the offensive. On this basis, he concludes that this "is the most

important

and irrefutable proof that these plans were not at all the subject of "cabinet research", but were consistently and firmly put into practice.

Further, developing this idea, Solonin cites a number of facts as evidence. He writes that at a meeting of the Defense Committee on April 12, 1941, the issues "On the monetary allowance of the personnel of the Red Army, the Navy and the NKVD troops for wartime" and "On the creation of a commission to submit

deferrals

from conscription for mobilization and during the war. Also indicates that May 10, 1941

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The Defense Committee approved a list of issues to be considered at the meeting, including the issue "On additional cost estimates for the period of mobilization and the first month of the war", and on May 12, 1941, the item "On work of the Civil Air Fleet (Civil Air Fleet) in wartime. Finally, Solonin says that on June 4, 1941, People's Commissar of the Navy N. G. Kuznetsov sent a

memorandum to the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars N. A. Voznesensky: .41 to 1.01.43".

Of course, all these documents indirectly confirm the preparation of the USSR for war, but experts are well aware that all of them could be developed in peacetime in case of war. Consequently, they cannot be direct evidence of the preparation of the Soviet Union for war against Germany in the summer of 1941.

A prominent researcher of the initial period of the war for the Western strategic direction, V.V. Abaturov, a leading employee of the Institute of Military History of the Armed Forces of Russia, writes in the book "In the Western Direction" that in the "Strategic development of the operational department of the Wehrmacht high command for the preparation and conduct of the campaign

against the USSR" dated September 15, 1940, the German military-political leadership predicted three options for possible actions of the Red Army at the beginning of the war. Among the first, the option of the Soviet Union delivering a preemptive strike against the deploying German troops was considered. But, according to the developers of the plan, this option was no longer possible due to the inability of the command and troops of the Red Army to deliver a powerful blow to East Prussia and Northern Poland.

No one currently has any other documents confirming the existence of the plans of the Soviet Union to be the first to attack Germany. Therefore, I will not be categorical in answering this question, but I want to offer the reader some documents, operational-tactical calculations and my own reasoning made on this basis.

The art of war predetermines the solution of the tasks of armed struggle by two types of military operations—offensive or defensive. Defense is considered a passive form of combat and is used if there are no forces for an offensive or if one of the parties wants to weaken the other for a subsequent offensive. An offensive is considered a type of military action that leads to victory. Therefore, the Soviet Union, knowing about Germany's preparations for the war in 1941, had to prepare either for defense or

to inflict a preemptive strike on the enemy.

At the beginning of 1940, the cautious B. M. Shaposhnikov, as chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, was replaced by a participant in the war in Spain and the Soviet-Finnish war, K. A. Meretskov. But Meretskov also turned out to be a cautious person. Having filled the "bumps" in the war with the Finns, especially during the assault on the Mannerheim Line, he correctly assessed the low offensive capabilities of the Red Army and also became a defensive position. As a result, he supported the decision of B. M. Shaposhnikov to build a line of fortified areas on the new border of the USSR and began to develop operational plans for covering the state border. By the end of 1940, these plans at the level of the General Staff -

military district were almost ready.

However, these defensive sentiments were not shared by S. K. Timoshenko, who was also a participant in the Soviet-Finnish war, and in May 1940 was appointed People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR. A native of the 1st Cavalry Army, he believed that it was necessary to beat the enemy with an offensive and on his territory.

To sum up the results of 1940, at the end of December, a meeting of the highest command and political staff of the Red Army was held in Moscow. It was attended by the leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff, heads of central departments, commanders, members of military councils and chiefs of staff of military districts, armies, heads of military academies, inspector generals of military branches, commanders of some

corps, divisions - in total more than 270 people.

At the meeting, Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army General of the Army K. A. Meretskov made a report. At the beginning of his speech, he recalled the shortcomings revealed during the summing up of the results of the Soviet-Finnish war. Having considered a number of issues of a tactical nature, Kirill Afanasyevich turned to the problems of operational values.

In particular, he noted that the experience of recent wars, exercises and field trips showed insufficient operational readiness and military culture of the highest command personnel, military, army, front-line and especially aviation headquarters. From the report of the Chief of the General Staff it followed that at the end of 1940, the issues of the use of formations and large formations of the Ground Forces and the Air Force, despite the experience of the liberation campaigns of Soviet troops in Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, the bitter lessons of the Soviet-Finnish war, remained unresolved.

Many did not like the report of K. A. Meretskov, especially those who had little interest in the development of military affairs in Germany and blindly believed in the invincible power of the Red Army. Thus, it is known that already at the end of the first day of the meeting, Marshals S. M. Budyonny and G. I. Kulik met with J. V. Stalin and expressed their dissatisfaction with the atmosphere of the meeting.

The situation began to improve after G. K. Zhukov, commander of the troops of the Kyiv Special Military District, made a long report on the topic "The nature of the modern offensive operation" the next day. At the beginning of his report, G.K. Zhukov emphasized the importance of the offensive as a type of military action by troops

And

pointed out the factors on which its success depends. He advocated an offensive with decisive goals and explained the failures of the Spanish leadership in the civil war solely by his inability to prepare and conduct an offensive.

Then Georgy Konstantinovich dwelled in detail on the nature of the hostilities in the military conflict on the Khalkhin-Gol River. He stated: "The general offensive operation ... is a modern operation, quite instructive both from the point of view of its organization, material support, and its conduct." Then he described this operation in sufficient depth and comprehensively, paying special attention to the issue of achieving surprise. G.K. Zhukov noted that the efforts of the Soviet command "were reduced to giving the enemy the impression that we were not preparing to attack, but were preparing to defend ourselves."

Further in his report, G.K. Zhukov sharply criticized the first offensive operations of the Red Army in the Soviet-Finnish war, noting that they were thwarted by

reason for "completely unsatisfactory training", and the passivity of the defense  
Polish

troops in September 1939. At the same time, he praised the offensive operations of the German troops.

The military leaders present at the meeting listened to the report of G.K. Zhukov with great attention. Shortly after this report, a well-known operational-strategic card game took place, during which G.K. Zhukov, suddenly going on the offensive, outplayed General D.G. Pavlov. The results of this operational-strategic game were immediately reported to I. V. Stalin with the corresponding accompanying comments. Therefore, it is not surprising that a few days after this, Georgy Konstantinovich was appointed to the post of Chief of the General Staff instead of the cautious and judicious General K. A. Meretskov.

With the advent of G.K. Zhukov, the General Staff began to develop a plan for delivering a preventive strike, or rather, a plan for the war of the USSR against Germany. Historians are well aware of such a document as "Considerations on the Plan for the Strategic Deployment of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union", submitted by Georgy Konstantinovich for consideration by the Politburo on May 15, 1941. It states, in part: "Considering

What

Germany currently keeps her army mobilized, with rears deployed, she has the ability to warn us in the deployment and inflict a sudden

hit. In order to prevent this, I consider it necessary in no case to give the initiative to the German command, to forestall the enemy in deployment and to attack the German army at the moment when it will be in the deployment stage and will not have time to organize the front and the interaction of troops (emphasis mine. - Avi.)".

It is known that this document was not signed by either G.K. Zhukov or S.K. Timoshenko and, moreover, was not approved by I.V. Stalin, which means that it had no force and could only be considered as proposals for one of the options for the actions of the Soviet troops in case of war in the Western theater of operations.

At the same time, I do not rule out that G. K. Zhukov's proposals for delivering a preventive strike were agreed with People's Commissar of Defense S. K. Timoshenko and discussed at the highest level. But if they have not received their development, then I.V. Stalin and members of the Politburo doubted the possibility of realizing such an option. Perhaps this was prevented by the conclusions of a special commission, which in the spring of 1941, having inspected many formations of the Red Army, concluded on their low combat capabilities. As a result, G.K. Zhukov failed with his plan for delivering a preventive strike and was forced to put in motion the defense plan developed by K.A. Meretskov.

At the same time, the presence of "Considerations" by G.K. Zhukov dated May 15, 1941 allows many to talk about what would happen if the Soviet Union struck first  
By

troops of the Wehrmacht, concentrated at its borders, and launched a decisive offensive on

selected directions. Some believe that this would not only thwart aggression



Germany, but would have led to completely different outcomes of the Second World War. Others, and there are also many of them, are sure that nothing good would come of this for the Soviet Union, since the Red Army at that time, for various reasons, was unable to lead

strategic offensive operations. However, as the main reason  
called  
human factor.

I will not go into polemics with either one or the other. Having worked for a quarter of a century on

teaching at a leading military academy, I know for sure that delivering a preventive strike requires very thorough preliminary preparation and not every successfully launched offensive achieves its goals. Also, I do not deny the importance of the human factor in military affairs, despite the fact that decisions at the level of the regiment

and above are taken collectively. I propose to consider this issue without excessive subjective emotions, relying only on factual material and mathematical calculations.

Let me remind you that by the end of the 1930s, Soviet military theory had developed and tested in practice during the exercises a deep offensive operation. According to this theory, the army, having in its

composition two rifle, one mechanized corps and one or two aviation divisions, was able, advancing in a zone of 50-80 kilometers, to break through the prepared enemy defenses in a sector of 20-30 kilometers with rifle formations and, having entered into 6th mechanized corps (two tank and one mechanized divisions, in total 1031 tanks in the state), advance to a depth of 100 kilometers in 7-10 days. Such a well-known theorist as N. Varfolomeev writes about this in his work "Shock Army".

We also know that by the summer of 1941, to build up efforts, the front commanders had several more mechanized corps and rifle divisions at their disposal, which, with the success of the first defensive operations, could, having increased the efforts of the troops, launch an offensive on enemy territory.

Now let's move from theory to facts. By June 1941, the configuration of the Soviet-German border created two protrusions in a western direction, one in the Bialystok region (Western Special Military District), the second in the Lvov region (Kiev Special Military District). In the Bialystok ledge were the 3rd and 10th armies, in the Lvov - 6th and

26th Army. The 3rd and 10th armies included 7 rifle, 2 cavalry, 6 tank, 2

motorized divisions, which included more than 170 thousand personnel, almost 1000 tanks, over 2000 guns and mortars, about 300 aircraft. As part of

The 6th and 26th armies had 6 rifle, 1 cavalry, four tank, two mechanized divisions, which included more than 200 thousand personnel, 2232 tanks, about 2500 guns and mortars, over 500 aircraft.

You also need to take into account that between the Bialystok and Lvov groups were the 4th and 5th armies of a fairly powerful composition. The 4th Army included the 14th Mechanized Corps, and the 5th Army included the 22nd Mechanized Corps, whose tank formations, if necessary, could be quickly transferred to

offensive lines of shock armies. In addition, the commander of the Western Special Military District still had the 7th, 13th, 17th, 20th, 23rd and 25th mechanized

corps, and the commander of the Kyiv Special Military District - the 9th, 15th, 16th, 19th and 24th mechanized corps. Taking into account these forces and means in the Western Special

military

the district had 2900 tanks, 14249 guns and mortars, 1785 combat aircraft. In the Kiev Special Military District - 5465

tanks, 14 756 guns and mortars, 2059 combat aircraft.

In military affairs, it is customary to calculate the density of forces and means along the entire offensive zone and in the direction of the main attack. If we assume that in the event of the outbreak of war on the part of the USSR, each shock army will advance in a strip of 80 kilometers, then

the density of forces and means in the zone of the 3rd and 10th armies of the Western Special Military District,

taking into account the use of front-line reserves, could be less than 20 kilometers per rifle (cavalry) division and for each kilometer of the offensive front up to 14 tanks, up to 100 guns and mortars, up to 13 combat aircraft. In the zone of operations of the strike group of the Kiev Special Military District, a rifle (cavalry) division could advance

at the front up to 15 kilometers, and up to 34 tanks, about 95 guns and mortars, 13 combat aircraft could operate at each kilometer. But in connection with the requirement for a decisive massing of forces and means in the direction of the main strikes, these densities could be much higher.

Now let's evaluate the enemy. The troops of the 9th field army and the 3rd tank group from the Army Group Center were located against the Bialystok ledge. Against Lvov

ledge were the 17th field army and the 1st tank group from the army group "South". Field armies consisted exclusively of infantry divisions, which did not include

there were not a single tank, but there were 212 guns and mortars, 75 anti-tank guns and 96 anti-tank rifles. The 3rd

tank group (commanded by General G. Goth) consisted of four tank and three mechanized divisions. The 1st tank group (commanded by General E. Kleist) consisted of five tank and three mechanized divisions. In 1941, the Wehrmacht tank division consisted of two motorized, artillery and one tank regiment. This regiment had 209 tanks.

The motorized division also did not have a single tank. Consequently, the enemy had 827 tanks against the Bialystok ledge, and a little more than one thousand against the Lvov ledge.

Somewhat south of the Bialystok ledge was the 2nd Panzer Group (commanded by General G. Guderian), which included five tank and four mechanized divisions. If we assume that, if necessary, this group could be withdrawn to the reserve of the main command and transferred to the directions of the main enemy attacks, then this is another 1045 tanks. Thus, at the beginning of the operation

ratio

in tanks against the Bialystok ledge, taking into account the use of the 2nd tank group in full force, it could be 1: 1.5 in favor of the Soviet troops, against the Lvov - 1: 5.4 in favor of the Soviet troops.

Now for aviation. In the zone of Army Group Center, the enemy had 1,677 combat aircraft, including 530 fighters and 980 bombers. As part of the troops

Western Special Military District had 1150 combat aircraft, including 408 bombers. In the zone of Army Group South, the Germans had 2010 aircraft, and the troops of the Kyiv Special Military District had about the same number

aircraft, of which 466 were bombers. Some superiority, it would seem, is on the side of the enemy. But if the start of hostilities is achieved by surprise and strikes against enemy airfields are unexpected, this ratio can change dramatically in a short time.

Suffice it to recall the many hundreds of aircraft that the Soviet troops lost on the ground on June 22, 1941.

Consider the issue of engineering equipment for the theater of operations by the German troops. As you know, unlike the Soviet Union, the German command in 1941 did not spend energy on the construction of fortified areas on its

territory. Field defense was also practically not prepared. Therefore, in the event of going on the offensive, the Soviet troops

should not have met stubborn resistance directly along the state border, and the counterattacks of the Wehrmacht tank divisions would also not have been able to significantly affect the overall operational situation.

Based on the availability of forces and means, the nature of the enemy's defense, it is possible to predict the ratio of losses of the parties in the operation. When attacking an unprepared defense, the Soviet troops nevertheless had to suffer twice as many losses as the defending German troops. When repelling counterattacks not prepared in advance by German tank divisions, the losses of the parties could be approximately equal. But already with the beginning of the withdrawal of the German troops, their losses should have significantly exceeded the losses of the Red Army formations leading the frontal pursuit. When switching to pursuit on parallel routes, taking into account flank attacks, the losses of the defending side in relation to the attacking side could be 3:1. But if we take into account that such pursuit often ends with the encirclement of the enemy, then we can talk about the complete defeat of the opposing enemy grouping with relatively small losses among the advancing troops.

Thus, in theoretical terms, the implementation of the plan for a preventive strike proposed by the General Staff of the Red Army in mid-May 1941 to members of the Politburo and personally to I.V. Stalin was quite possible. But why did I. V. Stalin abandon this idea?

Apparently, the time factor played a certain role. From the approved concept of a strategic offensive operation to the issuance of a direct combat order to the troops, as practice shows, it takes at least six months. It took the German command so much time to prepare for the implementation of the Barbarossa plan in 1941. It took the Soviet command the same amount of time to prepare the Manchurian strategic offensive operation in 1945. May 15, 1941

plan

a preemptive strike, proposed by the General Staff of the Red Army, was signed and not approved. This means that there was no reference point for the beginning of its implementation and there was no implementation itself, accompanied by an avalanche of directives, orders

And

other military documents. At least, the enemy, who defeated the headquarters of the Southwestern Front, several armies, a dozen corps and many dozens of divisions,

Not

managed to obtain not a single such document, and Goebbels would not be silent.

This suggests that there were no such documents, and that the Soviet Union in 1941 was not preparing for an attack on Germany and was not preparing a strategic offensive operation.

The second point - I. V. Stalin, apparently, doubted the successful outcome of such an operation. This question is very difficult and requires reasoning in parallel several directions.

Firstly, I. V. Stalin understood that it was impossible to hide from the enemy the months-long preparations for such a large-scale operation. He was sure that, having learned about this, the German command would have taken appropriate retaliatory measures, first of all

V

in terms of creating a defense in depth, well developed in engineering terms, saturated with anti-tank weapons. It was no longer possible to count on an easy and quick breakthrough of such defense.

Secondly, Iosif Vissarionovich was well aware that the Wehrmacht was significantly superior to the Red Army in terms of the quantity and quality of command and control equipment, which was one of the determining factors, especially in the offensive, when it was practically impossible to rely on wired communication lines. The Nazis widely and quite skillfully used radio communications in the link from the general staff to a

separate tank crew. The Soviet troops, on the other hand, experienced an acute shortage of radio stations, and commanders, commanders and staffs were not trained to work using these controls. There was a kind of radio fear in some, while others sinned by transmitting combat orders and reports in plain text. In the first case, command and control of troops was disrupted before the laying of a wire communication line; in the second, the transmitted information often became the property of the enemy. This was fully manifested in June 1941 and repeatedly made itself felt in the future.

Thirdly, the human factor also played an important role. By June 1941, many Wehrmacht generals had not only a good military education, great practice in command and control, but also offensive experience gained during the Polish campaign and in the west in 1939-1940. For example, the chief of the general staff of the German ground forces, Colonel-General F. Halder, worked in this supreme body of operational control for about 25 years, all commanders of army groups, field armies and tank groups had academic education behind them and served in these positions from 5 to 10 years .

JV Stalin knew that the state of the officer corps of the Red Army at the beginning of 1941 was far from the best. Undoubtedly, the repressions of 1937-1938 had an effect. According to incomplete data, three Marshals of the Soviet Union, 14 army commanders of the 1st and 2nd ranks, 60

commanders, 136 division commanders were repressed at that time. It was also necessary to take into account that in the last pre-war years the number of the Red Army increased sharply: if in 1935 there were 930 thousand people in its ranks, then on January 1, 1941, 4.2 million people were already under arms. Due to the mass conscription, new formations, formations and units were deployed, which there was practically no one to command.

To cover the shortage in senior command personnel in the summer of 1940, at the request of People's Commissar of Defense S. K. Timoshenko and the instructions of I. V. Stalin,

the cases of more than 300 repressed military leaders were reviewed. As a result, almost 250 commanders were returned to service. Among them were K. K. Rokossovsky, A. V. Gorbатов, A. I. Todorsky, A. V. Golubev and others. By January 1, 1941, more than 12 thousand commanders and political workers returned to military service, mainly from among those

who is not  
was arrested in 1937-1938, but was under the supervision of the NKVD.

At the same time, I. V. Stalin was well aware that the professional level of training of the highest commanding staff of the Red Army was low. Thus, the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Marshal of the Soviet Union S. K. Timoshenko and the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, General of the Army G. K. Zhukov, had military education at the level of academic courses. The commander of the Western Special Military District, General of the Army D. G. Pavlov, was

appointed  
in June 1940, having behind him the experience of commanding a tank brigade. The commander of the troops of the Kyiv Special Military District, Colonel-General M.P. Kirponos, was appointed to the post in February 1941. Prior to that, from 1934 to 1939 he was the head of the Kazan Infantry School, during the Soviet-Finnish War he commanded a division for six months, in 1940 he commanded a rifle corps for two months, after

after which he was immediately appointed commander of the Leningrad Military District, and six months later he was transferred to the commander of the largest Kiev Special Military District. Just as rapid were the career rises of most army commanders, very many commanders of corps and divisions. At the same time, it should be noted that, having received high positions, they had no experience in preparing and conducting front-line and army offensive operations, offensive battles of rifle and, above all, mechanized (tank) formations.

Not the best was the state of command personnel and at the level of regiments, battalions and companies. Nearly 70 percent of the commanding and commanding staff had experience in their position from one to six months. Up to 50 percent of battalion commanders, almost 68 percent of company and platoon commanders had only six months of training in courses.

The military training of reserve officers was extremely low. Of this category of persons who, in the event of war, were to take responsible positions, only 0.2 percent had a higher military education, 10 percent graduated from military schools, and

rest  
almost 90 percent are short-term courses for reserve officers.

If we take into account all these negative points, then Stalin's doubts that the Red Army in 1941 will be able to prepare and conduct a strategic offensive operation to defeat the opposing group of German troops will become quite understandable.

And one more very important point. The Soviet leadership, which at the beginning of 1941 had only the "Treaty of Friendship and Borders with Germany" dated September 28, 1939, but  
Not  
had similar agreements neither with Poland, nor with Great Britain, nor with France, nor with other European countries, nor with the United States, it was well understood in what international isolation the USSR would find itself in the event of a preemptive strike against German troops located on the territory of Poland.

After all, when in the fall of 1939 the troops of the Belorussian and Ukrainian fronts entered Poland, the government and the high command of this country, assessing the real events,

were forced to state that Poland is not at war with the Soviet Union, and the government of this country did not

emigrate to the USSR, but to England, with which Poland had a corresponding alliance agreement. And if the Soviet troops had struck at the German troops located on the territory of Poland, the USSR would automatically have been declared an aggressor and would have found itself in a state of war with Poland and England. When Soviet troops went on the offensive on the territory of German-occupied Czechoslovakia, the USSR automatically became an opponent of the Czechoslovak government in exile and France.

And, finally, I. V. Stalin did not forget about the position taken by the governments of England and the United States at that time, which were the most active supporters of the redistribution of the world in order to obtain new sources of raw materials, cheap labor and the most extensive markets for their products. To solve these problems, it was necessary, first of all, to weaken Germany and Russia as much as possible, which at that time were the most rapidly developing countries in Europe. A protracted war between these countries was the best solution to this problem. It only remained to find a worthy reason to start such a war. An attack by the USSR on German troops located on the territory of Poland and Hungary would immediately solve this problem. Moreover, after the USSR was declared an aggressor, the United States and other countries untied their hands

in terms of providing support and assistance to the affected side, while England and France received the opportunity for the most free political maneuver in the future.

Thus, there is no reason to talk about the preparation by the Soviet Union of a preventive strike against Germany in the summer of 1941 and to associate this myth with the personality of I.V.

Stalin. The General Staff developed such a plan, but it apparently remained only on paper. At the same time, the fact is indisputable that on June 22, 1941, it was the German troops who invaded the Soviet Union with all their might, dealt a crushing blow not only to the armies covering the state border, but also to the civilian population, and developed a swift offensive to a greater depth in accordance with the reality. existing plan "Barbarossa". In this regard, Germany's aggression against the USSR has become a fact that no one will ever be able to dispute.

"Sudden" attack

At the same time, the myth that the German attack on the USSR

was a complete surprise to the Soviet leadership.

About the sudden attack of fascist Germany on the USSR on June 22, 1941, it is written in all Soviet encyclopedias and textbooks, every Soviet person sacredly believed in this for almost half a century. In the late 80s and early 90s, the press began

appear

publications by various authors that the German aggression was not at all sudden for the Soviet Union, but

became part of the anti-people policy of the Stalinist regime. Only a few researchers considered the events of June 22, 1941 not as a criminal activity or bungling of the Soviet leadership, but as the result of a complex military-political game between A. Hitler and JV Stalin. Even later, works appeared in which surprise (surprise) is considered from the standpoint of military art, as a result of specific work carried out at the level of general

headquarters, commanders, commanders, their headquarters and troops.

In 2001, the book "Military Cunning" by Doctor of Military Sciences, General of the Army V.N. Lobov, was published, in which the achievement of surprise is seen as the highest manifestation of military cunning and an effective means of achieving victory over the enemy. In the preface, referring to the statement of the ancient commanders, he writes, in particular: "Cunning in war has always been regarded as a rational and necessary type of activity, since it acted as a coefficient of strength, that is, it increased the strength or power of a successful cunning. Refusing to use cunning in warfare undermined one's own strength. Therefore, when all other elements of power in a war were equal, cunning made it possible to use their capabilities more economically, achieving a faster victory with the least cost and casualties. In the event of an inequality of rivals, cunning helped the weaker side to compensate for the quantitative or other lag ...

Outstanding commanders (as well as statesmen. - Auth.) won because, other things being equal, they surpassed the enemy in flexibility of mind and firmness of will, they creatively used the principles of military art, multiplying their

effectiveness in this particular situation. As far as possible, they forced even unfavorable factors to work for

themselves, imposed their plan of action on the enemy, delivered sudden blows at him from the most unexpected and most sensitive side for him. They

Not

they considered strength alone to be the decisive factor of success; by itself, it still does not determine the nature and outcome of the struggle. After all, it is possible to impose one's will, to achieve victory with smaller forces over a superior enemy, only when the achievements of military art are creatively and skillfully used, when new means and methods of armed struggle are reliably hidden from the enemy and he is misled about the plans,

availability

strength and readiness for action.

Thus, relying on military cunning, one of the goals of which was to achieve surprise, has always been considered as an integral part of military art. The days of "knightly" biathlon on equal terms are long gone. Everyone tried to preempt the enemy in actions or to unravel the plans of the other side in advance in order to prepare a trap for the enemy in a timely manner. In both cases, the stake was placed on disinformation and surprise, and in the choice of means to achieve them, no longer

were considered.

And Germany succeeded in this business and, naturally, its leader Adolf Hitler.

In the headquarters and troops of the Wehrmacht, where a large number of officers and generals of the old Kaiser's army served, who received a good academic education and had extensive combat and service experience, much attention was traditionally paid to issues of military cunning. Surprise, as one of the manifestations of military cunning, has always been in the first place. They also tried to instill their attitude towards military cunning in A. Hitler, who by the end of the 1930s was already a great specialist in the field of political cunning.

The first big surprise for many countries in Europe was the rapid creation of the armed forces of Germany. This enormous work has been done under the noses of the world

public and successfully completed by 1939. As a result of this work, A. Hitler

received powerful armed forces, already "trained" in the fighting in Spain, the occupation of Czechoslovakia.

A major step in disinforming the future enemy was the campaign using the visits of foreign experts, who then spread tales at home about the power and invulnerability of Germany. Often this was done out of ignorance of the true state of affairs, often with a certain intent, for the purpose of intimidation.

In August 1938, when the Czechoslovak crisis was just heating up, G. Goering, on the orders of A. Hitler, invited the leaders of the French Air Force on an inspection visit. The chief of the French aviation headquarters, General Joseph Vuilleme, agreed and took several people with him. The French were shown the well-equipped barracks of the Luftwaffe personnel, modern airfields with rows of the latest aircraft for that time, and practical exercises for pilots. Then Vuilleme and his staff conducted

By

ultramodern aircraft factory in Orienburg. They saw dozens of medium bombers on the assembly line, perfect bomb shelters dug deep into the ground, everything in full combat readiness. They saw how the Xe-111 runs on one engine in flight. Then the French were invited to look at the aircraft factory from the Xe-111 aircraft. When this aircraft reduced its speed to its maximum, a Xe-100 aircraft whistled past according to a prearranged plan. When both aircraft landed, the Germans led the stunned visitors to the Xe-100 and explained that this aircraft had only recently completed factory tests and had already been put into service.

— And how long will it take to put it into mass production? Willem asked.

They answered him:

- The second line is already ready, and the third will be put into operation in two weeks.

This was not true, but the trick worked, and the French were practically in shock. Wüllemé later admitted that he was shocked by what he saw in the Luftwaffe and gloomily predicted that "if the war began, as you suggest, at the end of September, then in two weeks there would not be a single French aircraft left."

At the same time, Germany purposefully and not without success influenced world public opinion through the Americans. The informant was Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh, who, beginning in 1936, visited Germany on assignment from American military intelligence specifically to study the true state of affairs in the Luftwaffe. It is not known on what basis, but this intelligence officer gave information that

The German Air Force is one of the most powerful in the world.

During his second visit to the Reich in October 1937, Lindbergh reported that the Luftwaffe had at its disposal an air fleet of 10,000 aircraft, of which 5,000 were bombers, and received from 500 to 800 new aircraft every month.

machines.

On this basis, he concluded that the Luftwaffe was "stronger than all the air forces of other European countries put together."



The information obtained in this way has been studied in the UK and the USA at the highest level. Shortly thereafter, in September 1938, at a meeting in Munich, France and Great Britain gave Germany the border region of

Czechoslovakia. A few days later, Lindbergh received the German Eagle Cross from Goering's hands as a token of gratitude. In the United States, he was also highly acclaimed.

At 4:45 am on September 1, 1939, the Wehrmacht suddenly invaded Poland. Despite the existence of Anglo-French treaty obligations to Poland, A.

Hitler knew that both these countries would remain "indifferent" to the fate of Poland. This was also due to misinformation. In his speech, delivered at 10 am on September 1 in the Reichstag, which was simultaneously broadcast on the radio to the whole world, A. Hitler stated: "For more than 6 years I have been busy building the armed forces of Germany.

In

During this period, more than 90 billion Reichsmarks were spent on the construction of today's Wehrmacht. Our armed forces are the most equipped

armed forces in the world, and they are superior to the German army of 1914. My confidence in them will never be shaken."

A. Hitler's statement about 90 billion Reichsmarks was a strong exaggeration, a deliberate lie in order to inspire the Germans and instill fear in their opponents. And yet they believed him. One post-war German economist who studied this issue noted: "Public views on the size of weapons were greatly exaggerated. The German government at that time did nothing

did not do to refute these views; on the contrary, they were necessary propaganda, creating the illusion of military power, which in reality could not be on such a scale.

Hitler's ruse ended with the invasion of Poland in September 1939, when the Poles decided to fight back, and after two days of "indecision" demonstrations, Britain and France formally went to war. But the powerful Franco-British forces at that time limited themselves to only minor actions, as if they thought they could still negotiate with Hitler. A six-month period followed, later called the "strange war", during which the Wehrmacht was able to increase its power.

This was followed by sudden attacks by German troops on Denmark, Belgium, Norway and, finally, on France. For the Netherlands, the war ended after five days. In the same short period of time, the fate of Belgium, France and the British Expeditionary Force was actually decided. For the Germans, everything went according to plan, and not only according to plan, but in

compliance

with strategic and tactical plans. Their success surpassed even the wildest dreams of A. Hitler. The German generals were amazed at the lightning speed and scope of their own victories. The authority of A. Hitler in the country and the army grew stronger by leaps and bounds.

In terms of military art, the operation of the German troops carried out against Belgium and the Anglo-French troops in the Ardennes was indicative. At the end of the fourth day of the German offensive, their tank units,

introduced into the gap after the infantry,

captured

four bridges across the river Meuse. The next day, May 14, the avalanche erupted. The German tank group,

unprecedented in the history of wars in terms of numbers, concentration of military equipment, mobility and striking power, supported by a large mass of bomber and attack aircraft, broke through the 9th and 2nd French armies and rushed to the English Channel. Each tank division had its own self-propelled artillery and one brigade of motorized infantry, after the tank divisions there was a motorized infantry in readiness to finish off the cut-off (surrounded) enemy and gain a foothold on the achieved lines. It was an offensive organized according to the most advanced theory of the military art of that period, which one could only dream of. As a result of this operation, on May 27, the King of Belgium agreed to unconditional surrender, and the Anglo-French troops were pinned down.

To  
sea near Dunkirk.

On June 5, the Germans unexpectedly launched a massive attack against the French on the Somme, going on the offensive along a front of about 400 kilometers. And again, after powerful air strikes, the Wehrmacht tank divisions rushed to the offensive after the infantry. The French were unable to organize resistance. On June 14, the Germans entered Paris without a fight. On June 17, Pétain pleaded for a truce.

On the agenda was the Soviet Union, the decision to attack which was made in Berlin in early 1940. By that time, Soviet intelligence had been closely following Germany's military preparations for many years. Already in the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s, on the basis of cadres selflessly devoted to the cause of the revolution and along the line

The Comintern created a fairly dense and active network of agents that worked in neighboring states in the interests of the USSR. A great contribution to the formation and development of Soviet military intelligence was made by Yan Karlovich Berzin, who headed the Intelligence Directorate from 1924 to 1935. During this period, such prominent Soviet intelligence officers as R. Sorge, L. Manevich, S. I. Mrochkovsky began to work.

Undoubtedly, the repressions of 1937-1939 went through the cadres of Soviet military intelligence in a devastating wave. Then only in the central office, according to some information, about 300 people were repressed. In this "meat grinder" suffered: the chiefs of the Intelligence Directorate commander Semyon Petrovich Uritsky (April 1935 - June 1937) and the army commissar of the 2nd rank Yan Karlovich Berzin (June - August 1937), Alexander Grigoryevich Orlov (September 1937-1939); Deputy Chiefs of the Intelligence Directorate Corps Commissar Artur Khristoforovich Artuzov (May 1934 - January 1937), Senior Major of State Security Mikhail Konstantinovich Alexandrov (January - August 1937), Divisional Commander Alexander Matveyevich Nikonov (January 1935 - August 1937); chiefs of the 1st

(Western) Department Corps Commissar Otto Ottovich Steinbrück (January 1935 - April 1937), Divisional Commander Oscar Ansovich Stigga (April - November 1937), Colonel Alexander Ivanovich Starutin (November 1937 - May 1939). The same personnel reshuffling took place in

other departments. The repressions also affected the heads of the intelligence departments of the western military districts.

After the arrest of A. G. Orlov in April 1939, I. I. Proskurov, who had no experience in organizing intelligence work, was appointed head of the Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army. In June 1940, he was replaced in this post by Lieutenant General F. I. Golikov, also very

far from exploration.

Undoubtedly, the staff turnover in the intelligence leadership caused great harm to the cause, despite the fact that competent and dedicated people continued to work effectively on the ground.

In Poland, from 1933 to 1939, Soviet intelligence agents led by the German journalist Rudolf Gornstadt operated. The members of the group they created were Counselor of the German Embassy Rudolf von Schelia, an employee of the same embassy and correspondent Gerhard Kegel, German journalist Ilse Stöbe. After the capture of Poland by the Germans, Gornstadt left for Moscow, and the rest got a job at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin. In 1942 Stöbe and Shelia were arrested and executed, Kegel

worked successfully until the end of the war, and then held leadership positions in the GDR.

An illegal resident in Poland since 1936 was the Bulgarian communist Nikola Vasilev Popov. He emigrated from Bulgaria to the USSR in 1923, received a good  
military

education, had extensive experience in the Intelligence Directorate, from 1926 periodically traveled abroad to work.

Having received the task to work in Poland under the pseudonym "Cherny", he created a good network of agents in this country, which, in terms of its capabilities, went far beyond the borders of this country. But after the attack of fascist Germany on the USSR, Popov's connection with the Center was practically interrupted. In January 1943 he was arrested and shot.

In Hungary, Colonel Nikolai Grigorievich Lyakhterov was appointed Soviet military attache and intelligence resident in June 1940, who since 1939 served as deputy head of the intelligence department of the Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army. Later in

A group of employees of this department was sent to Budapest. This group managed to obtain and send to the USSR a lot of important information concerning not only Hungary, but also other countries.

Legal resident in Czechoslovakia in 1939-1941. was Leonid Andreevich Mikhailov ("Rudolf"), who, under the name of Leonid Ivanovich Mokhov, was in charge of the office of the Consulate General of the USSR in Prague. He managed to create a developed network of agents in this country, but immediately before the German attack on the USSR, he was exposed and was forced to return to the USSR. Later, the head of the Prague Gestapo reported to his chief R. Heydrich that in the summer of 1941 a Soviet intelligence network was uncovered in Czechoslovakia, in connection with which about 200 people were arrested.

In Bulgaria in the 1930s, there was one of the most powerful Soviet intelligence networks, which was led by V.T. Sukhorukov (1935-1937). However, in March 1937 he was recalled  
v

Moscow was arrested. In May, a new Soviet military attache arrived in Bulgaria and

resident colonel Alexander Ivanovich Benediktov ("Hicks"), who had previously worked successfully in Persia and Afghanistan. The new resident managed to recruit an ideological supporter of the USSR, Stoyan Zasimov, a major general of the Bulgarian army, a member of the Military Union of Officers who were dissatisfied with the policies of the regime that existed in the country. This organization provided valuable information. But in March 1942, the "Red General" and many

his comrades were arrested and shot by the Gestapo.

In addition to this, many other intelligence groups and individual agents worked in Bulgaria in favor of the USSR. Valuable intelligence information from this country came to Moscow almost regularly until the end of the Great Patriotic War.

Soviet intelligence reported on the aggressive plans of the German government against the USSR as early as March 1935. "The German government and party have established a unified vision of Germany's mission in the East. The specific goals are as follows: an armed clash with the USSR is a foregone conclusion.

It is quite clear that from that time on the German agents acted constantly on the territory of the Soviet Union, but they became especially active after the annexation of the territories of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine, which previously belonged to Poland, to the USSR in the fall of 1939. At that time, the capitulated Polish army included many Belarusians and Ukrainians, whose families ended up in the territories occupied by the Red Army. The German command and intelligence services, having carried out preliminary work with

these

people, declared its readiness to transfer prisoners of war to the Soviet side. In this regard, on October 16, 1939, the People's Commissar of Internal

Affairs of the USSR L.P. Beria sent directive No. 807 to the NKVD task force on the Belorussian front "On organizing the reception from the German command and checking prisoners of war Belarusians and Ukrainians with families on Soviet territory." This directive ordered the headquarters of the Belorussian Front to accept 20 thousand prisoners of war from the German command, provide them with food and free rail travel to their places of residence.

It should be noted right away that initially no repressive measures were envisaged against these persons, with the exception of instructions in the acceptance process to ensure the identification of officers, intelligence officers and suspicious persons. About how this work was carried out, how many German agents were identified and how many of them

it turned out

on Soviet territory, not reported.

At the same time, there was also a mass transition to the territory of Germany of people who found themselves on the lands occupied by the Red Army (Western Ukraine and Western Belarus). So, at the end of October 1939, 465 people were detained, and up to several tens of thousands of people accumulated in refugee camps. The Soviet command considered the issue of the exchange of refugees, without missing, of course, the opportunity to introduce into their environment

their agents.

Thus, the exchange of prisoners of war and refugees between the USSR and Germany in the autumn of 1939 created the conditions for both sides to send their agents to neighboring countries. Of course, the quality of the bulk of these agents was low. But among them there could be high-class specialists capable of correctly assessing the situation and transmitting important reports. Another thing is how the parties took advantage of this opportunity?

Great assistance to the intelligence of Germany and the USSR was provided by the documents and intelligence network of the former Polish special service (plyacowka), captured as a result of the autumn military operations of 1939. On the basis of these documents, along with the defeat of the Poles' agent network on their territory, both Germany and the USSR made every effort to use Polish agents in their own interests.

Also, the German command (often through the Romanians or Hungarians) got the opportunity to obtain intelligence information from the territory of the USSR through the detachments of the anti-Soviet insurgent organization, whose activities in the western regions of Ukraine began already in the late autumn of 1939.

Intelligence information about Germany's preparations for an attack on the USSR began to arrive from various sources in February 1940. Then, from various sources, information began to come in about the transfer of German troops to the territory of Poland to the borders of the USSR. The first such report came from the border troops of the NKVD of the Ukrainian border district on February 16, 1940. It refers to the transfer of two divisions, an infantry regiment and a tank unit, and the carrying out of preparatory measures for the reception of other units. True, at the end of the report it is concluded:

"The reasons for the transfer of troops have not been established, but it is not excluded that this is due to the order of the German command to produce from March 1940 the drafting of ... Poles into the army."

On May 26, 1940, the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR received a message from the border troops of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR "On reconnaissance flights of German aircraft in the border zone" in the period from May 24 to 26, 1940.

On June 19, 1940, a summary of the 5th (intelligence) directorate of the Red Army was presented on the situation in Germany, Romania and Latvia. It, in particular, indicated the strengthening of German troops on the border with Lithuania on June 16 and 17. On the Soviet-Romanian border there was a concentration of two mountain rifle brigades.

This information primarily went through the NKVD of the USSR. In 1995, under the auspices of the Federal Counterintelligence Service of the Russian Federation, the Academy of the Federal Counterintelligence Service published a multi-volume work "State Security Organs of the USSR in the Great Patriotic War", presented as a collection of documents. The first volume of this work, which offers documents from the period November 1938 - December 1940, contains (document No. 94) a memorandum of the 1st Directorate of the GUPV NKVD of the USSR No. 19/47112 to the NKV USSR "On the preparation of

Germany for war with the USSR" dated June 28 1940. This was fragmentary information received from random sources - officials of the Estonian and Lithuanian shipping companies, who recently visited Germany. In particular, this document says: "... On June 24, 1940, the second navigator of the Lithuanian steamship Siauliai ...

speaking about the successes of Germany, said that after the defeat of England and France, Germany would

turn its forces against the USSR. He allegedly knows that in Germany tens of thousands of men aged 16 to 20 are

currently being trained in parachuting and the Russian language, who are intended for paratroopers during the war with the USSR.

At the very end of December 1940, the head of the intelligence department of the Red Army received a telegraphic report from the military attache from Berlin, in which he said that he had learned from highly informed military circles that Hitler had ordered preparations for war with the USSR, and war would be declared in March 1941. But there is no one's resolution on this document, which is stored in the archive.

Already on January 12, 1941, in the intelligence report No. 2 of the Border Troops Directorate of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR, it was reported that on December 9, the area of the city of Sanok was visited by the commander-in-chief of the German land army, Field Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch, who reviewed the troops and fortifications in the area. In the same summary

it was reported about the arrival of new German units in the border zone, the construction of barracks for personnel there, concrete firing points, loading and unloading areas on the railway and airfields.

This was followed by frequent cases of violations by the German side of the state border of the USSR. So, on January 24, 1941, the head of the border troops of the NKVD of the BSSR in his report also reports on the deployment of an army headquarters in Warsaw, and on

the territory of the border districts - the headquarters of an army corps, eight headquarters of infantry and one cavalry divisions, 28 infantry, seven artillery, three cavalry and one tank regiments, two aviation schools.

It was reported below: "From the moment the Convention was concluded to January 1, 1941, a total of 187 various conflicts and incidents arose on the border with Germany ... During the reporting

period, 87 cases of border violations by German aircraft were recorded ... "

In connection with the need to maximize the improvement of the intelligence and operational work of the state security organs and the increased volume of this work, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks on February 3, 1941, adopts a special resolution on the division of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the USSR into two people's commissariats: the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) and the People's State Security Commissariat (NKGB). The NKGB is entrusted with the

tasks of conducting intelligence work abroad and combating the subversive, espionage, sabotage, and terrorist activities of foreign intelligence services within the USSR. He is also instructed to carry out the operational development and liquidation of the remnants of all anti-Soviet parties and counter-revolutionary formations among various sections of the population of the USSR, in the system of industry, transport, communications, agriculture, etc., and also to protect the leaders of the party and government. The same decree ordered

the organization of the republican, regional, regional and district bodies of the NKGB and the NKVD.

On February 8, 1941, the following Resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR was adopted on the transfer of a special department from the NKVD of the USSR to the People's Commissariat of Defense of the USSR and the People's Commissariat of the Navy of the USSR. "Assign to the special departments of the NPO and the NKVMF (Third Directorates) tasks: to combat counter-revolution, espionage, sabotage, sabotage and all kinds of anti-Soviet manifestations in the Red Army and Navy; identifying and informing, respectively, the people's commissar of defense and the people's commissar of the Navy about all the shortcomings and the state of the army and navy units and about all available compromising materials and information on the military personnel of the army and navy.

The same document determined that "all appointments of the operational staff of the third directorates of the NPO and the NKVMF, starting with the operational regiment and the corresponding unit in the fleet, are made by orders of the people's commissars of defense and the Navy." Thus, in the structure of the Red Army and the Navy, powerful punitive bodies arose that had enormous powers and were not accountable to the commanders and commanders of the formations under which they operated. It was determined that the head of the 3rd department of the corps was subordinate to the head of the 3rd department of the district (front) and the commander of the district (front), and the head of the 3rd

department of the division - to the head of the 3rd department of the corps and the commander of the corps.

On February 7, 1941, the 2nd Directorate of the NKGB of the USSR reported rumors spreading among the diplomatic corps in Moscow about an impending German attack on

THE USSR. At the same time, it was indicated that the purpose of the German attack was the southern regions of the USSR, rich in grain, coal and oil. And on February 8, the same information was confirmed  
agent

Berlin residency of the NKGB of the USSR Corsican.

On March 9, 1941, a telegraph report was received from Belgrade from the military attaché to the head of the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army. IN

German

it was reported that "the German General Staff refused to attack the British Isles, the immediate task was set - the capture

of Ukraine and Baku, which should be carried out in April

— May

this year, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria are now preparing for this.

In March 1941, two more secret messages came from Berlin from an agent named Corsican. The first reported on the preparation of the German Air Force for military operations against the USSR. In particular, it said: "Among the officers

of the aviation headquarters there is an opinion that the military offensive against the USSR is supposedly timed for the

end of April or the beginning of May. These dates are associated with the intention of the Germans to keep the harvest for themselves, hoping that the Soviet troops, during the retreat, will not be able to burn more green bread. The second once again confirmed Germany's plans for a war against the USSR. At the same time, it was pointed out that the

main goal of the aggressor could be grain-producing Ukraine and the oil regions of Baku. The statements of the chief of the general staff of the German ground forces, General F. Halder, were also cited about the low combat capability of the Red Army.

Both of these messages were reported to I. V. Stalin, V. M. Molotov and L. P. Beria.

On March 24, 1941, a message was received from the Berlin residency of the NKGB of the USSR about the preparation of the General Staff of Aviation for military operations against the USSR. And this document emphasizes that "photographs of Soviet cities and other objects, in particular the city of Kyiv, are regularly received at the aviation headquarters."

On March 31, 1941, the head of foreign intelligence of the NKGB of the USSR informed the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR about the advance of German troops to the border of the Soviet Union. It was said about the transfer of specific formations and units of the German army. In particular, he reported that in the border points

of the General Government against the Brest region, the German authorities proposed to vacate all schools and additionally prepare premises for the arrival of the expected military units of the German army.

In early April 1941, the head of foreign intelligence of the NKGB of the USSR informed his higher authorities that, on his instructions, an agent named Starshina met with another agent named Corsican in Berlin.

At the same

time, Starshina, referring to other sources, announced the full preparation and development of a plan for Germany's attack

on the Soviet Union. According to available information, "the operational plan of the army consists in a lightning-fast surprise attack on Ukraine and advance to the east. From East Prussia, a blow is simultaneously struck to the north. The German troops advancing northward must link up with the army coming from the south, thereby cutting off the Soviet troops located between these lines, closing their flanks. Centers remain

without attention, following the example of the Polish and French campaigns.

On April 5, 1941, the Department of the Border Troops of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR reports on the construction by the Germans of airfields and landing sites in the border areas with the USSR. In total, from the summer of 1940 to May 1941, 100 airfields and 50 landing sites were built and restored on the territory of Poland. During this time, 250 airfields and 150 landing sites were built directly on the territory of Germany itself.

On April 10, the head of foreign intelligence of the NKGB of the USSR reports to the Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army specific data on the concentration of German troops on the Soviet border and the transfer of new formations and units there. At the same time, Yuna, an agent of the Berlin residency, reports on the plans of German aggression against the USSR.

On April 21, 1941, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the NKO of the USSR received another message from the NKVD of the USSR signed by the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR L.P. Beria about the receipt by the border detachments of the NKVD of new intelligence data on the concentration of German troops on the Soviet-German border.

At the end of April 1941, Moscow received another message from Berlin from an agent who worked in Germany under the name Starshin, with the following content:

"A source working at the headquarters of the German army reports: according to information received from the liaison officer between the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the headquarters of the German aviation Gregor, the question of Germany's action against the Soviet Union has been finally decided, and its beginning should be expected from day to day. Ribbentrop, who until now had not been a supporter of action against the USSR, knowing Hitler's firm determination in this matter, took the position of supporters of an attack on the USSR. The postscript to this message indicates that it was reported to I. V. Stalin, V. M. Molotov and L.

P.

Beria by the head of the 1st Directorate of the NKGB of the USSR Fitin on April 30, 1941, but the document does not contain resolutions of any of the named persons.

On the same day, April 30, 1941, an alarm message was received from Warsaw. It stated: "According to intelligence data received from various sources, in recent days it has been established that military preparations in Warsaw and on the territory of the General Government are being carried out openly, and German officers and soldiers are speaking quite frankly about the upcoming war between Germany and the Soviet Union, like a matter already decided. The war supposedly should begin after the end of spring field work...

From April 10 to April 20, German troops moved through Warsaw to the east continuously,

both during the night and during the day ... Trains are moving along the railways in an easterly direction, loaded mainly with heavy artillery, trucks and

parts

aircraft. Since mid-April, trucks and Red Cross vehicles have appeared on the streets of Warsaw in large numbers. The German authorities in Warsaw gave the order to urgently put in order all bomb shelters, darken all windows, and create Red Cross sanitary teams in every house. Mobilized and selected for the army all the vehicles of private individuals and civilian institutions, including German ones. WITH

start



April, all schools and courses are closed, and their premises are occupied by military hospitals.

This was also reported to I. V. Stalin, V. M. Molotov and L. P. Beria.

On May 6, 1941, the head of the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army, F. I. Golikov, made a special report "On the grouping of German troops in the east and southeast on May 5, 1941." This report explicitly stated

many

points on the preparation of Germany for war against the USSR. The conclusions stated: "In two months, the number of German divisions in the border zone against the USSR increased by 37 divisions (from 70 to 107). Of these, the number of tank divisions increased

from 6 to 12 divisions. With the Romanian and Hungarian armies, this will amount to about 130 divisions.

On May 30, 1941, the Chief of the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army received a telegraph report from Tokyo. It reported:

"Berlin informs Ott that the German action against the USSR will begin in the second half of June." Under the message was the signature "Ramsay (Sorge)". But even in this message there is no resolution of any of the leaders of the Soviet state.

On May 31, 1941, a special report of the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army No. 660569 about the grouping of German troops deployed near the border with the USSR fell on the desk of the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army G.K. Zhukov. This document says: "Read Zhukov 11.6.41."

On June 2, about the concentration of large formations of the German and Romanian armies on the border with the USSR, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks receives information from the Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and the authorized representative of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR in Moldova. Then the certificates of the Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of Ukraine about the military activities of Germany on the border with the USSR are received almost every day. On June 11, an agent of the Berlin residency of the NKGB of the USSR, acting under the name Starshin, reports about the upcoming German attack on the USSR in the near future. On June 12, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks received a message through the NKVD of the USSR about the strengthening of intelligence activities by the German side on

border with the USSR and in the border areas. In accordance with this message, from January 1 to June 10, 1941, 2080 border violators were detained by Germany.

On June 16, NKGB agents working in Berlin under the nicknames Starik, Sergeant-Major and Corsican receive reports about the timing of the German attack on the Soviet Union in the coming days. At the same time, the structural units of the NKGB and the NKVD of the USSR, in parallel with reports on the state of affairs at the border, continue to engage in routine paperwork.

On June 19, the NKGB of Belarus sends a special message to the NKGB of the USSR about the military mobilization preparations of fascist Germany for a war against the USSR. This message contains extensive information about the redeployment and deployment of German troops to the Soviet border. It is said about the concentration in the border areas of a large number of formations, units, combat aircraft, artillery pieces, boats and vehicles.

On this day, the NKGB resident Titus, who worked in Rome, reports that Germany's military operations against the USSR will begin between June 20 and 25, 1941.

On June 20, 1941, a telegraph report arrived to the head of the Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army from Sofia. It literally said the following: "Source

said today that a military clash is expected on June 21 or 22." There is also no resolution on this message.

On the same day (June 20, 1941), a telegraphic report also arrives from Sorge to the head of the Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army from Tokyo. In it, the intelligence officer writes that a war between Germany and the USSR is inevitable. This report was received by the 9th Division at 17:00

on June 21, 1941, but there is no resolution on it either.

On the evening of June 20, another intelligence report of the NKGB of the USSR No. 1510 was compiled on Germany's military preparations for an attack on the Soviet Union. It states the concentration of German troops near the border with the USSR and the preparation of fascist troops for military operations. In particular, it is said that machine guns and anti-aircraft guns have been installed in some houses in Klaipeda, that

forest for building bridges across the Western Bug River, in the Radom district of 100 inhabited

points, the population was evicted to the rear, that German intelligence sent its agents  
V

USSR for a short time - three or four days. These measures cannot be regarded otherwise than as direct preparation for the aggression that should

take place in the coming days. (State security agencies of the USSR in the Great Patriotic War.)

As a result of the analysis of all these documents, it can be concluded that Soviet intelligence on the territory of Germany and its allies worked quite successfully. Information about Hitler's decision to attack the USSR and the beginning of preparations for this action began to arrive in the Soviet Union more than a year before the start of the aggression.

Simultaneously with reconnaissance through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the GRU, reconnaissance was also carried out by the Western military districts, which constantly and in some detail reported on the preparations of Germany and her

allies to war against the USSR. Moreover, as we approached the fateful date, these reports became more frequent and more specific. From their content, Germany's intentions could not be doubted. The activities that were carried out on the other side of the border no longer had a reverse course, but inevitably had to

pour out

in a military operation of a strategic scale. This concerned the resettlement of the local population from the border strip, the saturation of this strip with troops, the clearing of the border strip from mines and other engineering barriers, the mobilization of vehicles, the deployment of field hospitals, the storage of a large number of artillery shells on the ground, and much more.

The top Soviet leadership and command of the Red Army had information about the composition and deployment of troops of the border military districts of the Soviet Union, which were received and summarized already in early February 1941, almost 5 months before the start of the aggression, and practically corresponded to reality.

However, the fact that many intelligence reports do not have the signatures of the highest leaders of the state and the highest ranks of the military leadership of the country suggests that they were either not brought to these people or ignored by these people. The first is actually

excluded by the practice of the Soviet bureaucracy of that time.

The second is possible in two cases: first, distrust of information sources; secondly, by the stubborn unwillingness of the country's top leadership to abandon their vision of the future course of events that they have worked out.

As is known, only general orders were sent to the troops from the General Staff in the last peaceful months. No specific reaction of the Soviet government and the leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense to the situation developing near the borders of the USSR was indicated. Moreover, the Soviet leadership and the General Staff constantly warned the local command "not to succumb to provocations", which negatively affected the combat readiness of the troops covering the state border. Apparently, interaction and mutual information between the bodies of the NKGB, the NKVD and the headquarters of the Red Army were poorly established.

Although it should be recognized that the measures taken by the NKVD, aimed at strengthening the protection of the border, were carried out. So, on June 20, 1941, the head of the border troops of the NKVD of the Belarussian District issued a special order in order to strengthen the protection of the state border. In accordance with this order, "the calculation of people for

duty to build so that from 23.00 to 5.00 the service was carried out at the border by all people

behind

with the exception of those returning from outfits. Set up posts for ten days on separate, most vulnerable flank directions under the command of an assistant chief outposts."

Thus, an opinion is being created that the Soviet leadership deliberately ignored intelligence information abundantly received from various sources about Germany's preparations for a war against the USSR. Some researchers say that this was a special line of conduct of the top Soviet leadership, who tried in every possible way to delay the start of the war in order to prepare the country and the Red Army. Others argue that in 1940-early 1941, the Soviet leadership was more interested in internal problems arising in the new territories annexed to the USSR in 1939-1940 than in external threats. In recent years, there are

such

authors who write that the behavior of the Soviet government on the eve of the war, and in particular position I.V. Stalin, was a manifestation of the leader's hatred for his people.

Of course, all this is only the subjective conclusions of various researchers. What do the facts say? Before me is an extract from the instructions of the Second Bureau of the General Staff of the French Army dated May 15, 1941. It says:

"At present, the USSR is the only European power that, having powerful armed forces, is not drawn into a world conflict. In addition, the volume of Soviet economic resources is so great that Europe, in the face of a continuing naval blockade, can be provided with raw materials and food from this reserve.

It seems that, up to the present time, the USSR, following the tactics of survival, has been trying to use the exhaustion of the forces of both belligerents to strengthen its own position ... However, the turn of events over the past two months makes us think that the USSR is not

will be able to carry out his plans in their original form and will probably be drawn into the war earlier than he thinks.

Based on the foregoing, to say that Germany's aggression against

USSR for the highest echelons of Soviet power and personally for I.V. Stalin was a complete surprise, not necessary. JV Stalin and his inner circle were quite well aware of what was happening in Berlin and at the western border of the USSR, and the events of June 22, 1941 should have been only the logical conclusion of the big diplomatic game that the Kremlin has been playing in recent years.

At the same time, a completely fair question arises: what prevented the Soviet leadership from promptly orienting the highest headquarters about the real state of affairs near the western border of the USSR? To date, there is no clear answer to this question.

Not

given. But it is quite obvious that such an orientation would hardly hasten the outbreak of war, but at the same time would significantly weaken the enemy's first blow.

the day before

In the book of G. K. Zhukov there is the full text of the directive, which the People's Commissar S. K. Timoshenko, after its approval by I. V. Stalin, gave to the troops of the western districts and the People's Commissar of the Navy at about 23 hours on June 21, 1941:

"1. During June 22–23, 1941, a sudden German attack is possible on the fronts of the Air Defense, PribvVO, ZapOVO, KOVO, and OdVO. The attack may start with provocative actions.

2. The task of our troops is not to succumb to any provocative actions that could cause major complications. At the same time, the troops of the Leningrad, Baltic, Western, Kyiv and Odessa military districts should be in full combat readiness to meet a possible surprise attack by the Germans or their allies.

3. I order:

a) during the night of June 22, 1941, covertly occupy the firing points of fortified areas on

state border;

6) before dawn on June 22, 1941, disperse all aviation, including military aviation, over field airfields, carefully disguise it;

c) put all units on combat readiness. Keep the troops dispersed and camouflaged;

d) put the air defense on alert without additional lifting of the assigned staff. Prepare all measures to darken towns and facilities;

e) no other activities are to be carried out without special instructions. (Zhukov G.K. Memoirs and reflections. S. 244).

With this directive, N. F. Vatutin immediately went to the General Staff in order to transfer it to the districts at the same time. The transfer to the districts was completed at 00.30 on June 22, 1941.

G.K. Zhukov also writes about this in his memoirs. In particular, he notes that information about Germany's preparation of aggression against the USSR was known to the General

headquarters, and immediately admits: "During the period of a dangerous military situation, we, the military, probably did not do everything to convince I.V. Stalin of the inevitability of war with Germany in the very near future and to prove the need

for urgent measures operational mobilization plan. Of course, these measures would not guarantee complete success in repelling the enemy onslaught, so

How

the forces of the parties were far from equal. But our troops could enter the battle in a more organized manner and, consequently, inflict much greater losses on the enemy. This is confirmed by the successful defensive actions of units and formations in the regions of Vladimir-Volynsky, Rava-Russkaya, Przemyśl and in sectors of the Southern Front.

Now let's remember that the mobilization plan was developed by the General Staff and approved only in February 1941. After that, only private directives were sent to the headquarters of the military districts, which indicated mobilization tasks, calendar dates for the main events, including the deadlines for the development of district mobilization plans - June 1, 1941, and in the Western Special Military District - June 15, 1941 of the year.

Below, G.K. Zhukov writes: "Now there are different versions about whether we knew or not the specific date for the start of the war.

I cannot say for sure whether I. V. Stalin was truthfully informed, perhaps he received it personally, but he did not inform me.

True, he once said to me:

"One person is giving us very important information about the intentions of the German government, but we have some doubts ...

Perhaps it was about R. Sorge, whom I learned about after the war.

Could the military leadership independently and in a timely manner open the exit of enemy troops directly to the initial areas, from where their invasion began on June 22? In those conditions, it was extremely difficult to do this.

In addition, as it became known from captured maps and documents, the command of the German troops actually concentrated on the borders at the very last moment, and its armored troops, which were at a considerable distance, were transferred to the starting areas only on the night of June 22.

The closest deputy chief of the General Staff of the Red Army was the chief of the Operations Directorate. On the eve of the war, this position was held by Nikolai Fedorovich Vatutin. He was a relatively young general (born in 1901), who in 1929 graduated from the Military Academy named after M.V. Frunze studied for a year at the Academy of the

General Staff, from which he was released ahead of schedule in 1937 in connection with the arrests of many

military leaders.

He served as Chief of Staff of the Kyiv Special Military District during

liberation campaign of Soviet troops in Western Ukraine, and since 1940 he headed

Operational Directorate of the General Staff. According to the memoirs of many contemporaries, N.

F. Vatutin was a literate and thinking person, capable of solving voluminous and complex problems. He had some experience in planning military operations within the framework of

the final operations of the Soviet-Finnish war and the actions of the troops of the military district during the liberation campaign. But this experience was clearly not enough to solve problems on the scale of the initial period of the Great Patriotic War.

Unfortunately, even from the available reports, the correct conclusions were not always drawn, which could promptly and authoritatively guide the top management. Here are some documents from the military archive in connection with this.

On March 20, 1941, the head of the Intelligence Directorate, General F.I. Golikov, presented to the leadership a report containing information of exceptional importance. This document outlined the options for possible directions of strikes by the Nazi troops during an attack on the Soviet Union. As it turned out later, they consistently reflected the development of the Barbarossa plan by the Nazi command, and in one of the options,

By

In essence, the essence of this plan was reflected.

...According to our military attache on March 14, it was indicated later in the report, the German major said: "We are heading east, to the USSR. We will take grain, coal, oil from the USSR. Then we will be invincible and can continue the war with England and America.

Finally, in this document, with reference to a message from the military attache from Berlin, it is indicated that "the start of hostilities against the USSR should be expected between May 15 and

June 15, 1941".

However, the conclusions from the information given in the report, in essence, removed all their significance. At the end of his report, General F.I. Golikov wrote:

"1. Based on all the above statements and possible options for action in the spring of this year, I think that the most possible date for the start of actions against the USSR will be the moment after the victory over England or after the conclusion of an honorable peace for Germany with her.

2. Rumors and documents that speak of the inevitability of a war against the USSR this spring must be regarded as disinformation coming from British and even, perhaps, German intelligence.

So, F. I. Golikov served as head of the Intelligence Directorate and deputy chief of the General Staff from July 1940. His report was prepared for the country's top leadership and was labeled "of exceptional importance."

Such reports are usually prepared very carefully and cannot be based on the words of some "German major".

They require the collection and analysis of dozens or even hundreds of different sources of information. And, as other military leaders testify, there was such information, including from the military attache in Berlin, from intelligence agents in the countries allies of Germany.

Now about the agents of the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff (now the Main Intelligence Directorate). This body exists mainly to conduct military intelligence in the interests of the country's security and carefully study a potential enemy. The arrival of German troops on the territory of Poland created ideal conditions for the

organization of intelligence work in this country. Czechoslovakia,

occupied by Germany, was also a good field for the activities of Soviet military intelligence. Hungary was considered by the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union for many years.

Union as a potential adversary, which required the presence of an expanded intelligence network there. The Soviet Union only recently ended the war with Finland and did not had

reason to trust her government. Romania was also offended by the rejection of Moldavia and Bessarabia and therefore required constant close attention.

And there is no doubt that the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff had its own agents

V

these countries and received relevant information from it. We have to doubt the quality of this agency, the information and the correctness of the reaction of F. I. Golikov and G. K. Zhukov to it.

From January 14, 1941, G.K. Zhukov already worked in the General Staff (Politburo resolution No. P25 / 85 of 14.1.41 on the appointment of the chief of the General Staff and commanders of military districts), was in the know, got acquainted with his deputies, heads of departments and departments. Twice, on January 29 and 30, he

With

People's Commissar of Defense was at the reception of I. V. Stalin. He constantly received alarming information from the Soviet-German border, he knew about the unpreparedness of the Red Army

To

war with Germany and in early February instructed the Chief of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff, Lieutenant-General G.K. Malandin, to

prepare an updated operational plan by March 22 in the event of a German attack on the Soviet Union. Then, on February 12, together with People's Commissar of Defense S. K. Timoshenko and the head of the organizational and mobilization department, Major General Chetverikov G.

K. Zhukov, presented I. V. Stalin with a mobilization plan, which was approved with little or no amendments. Thus, it turns out that the General Staff was thoroughly preparing to repel fascist aggression.

The meeting at which the report was made by the head of the Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army took place on March 20, 1941, when G.K. Zhukov had been in the post of chief of the General Staff for almost two months and had done some work to increase the combat capability of the Red

Army. At the same meeting, of course, was the People's Commissar of Defense S. K. Timoshenko. Deputy Chief of the General Staff F. I. Golikov reports to the leadership of the country conclusions that are fundamentally at odds with the conclusions of his direct superiors, and S. K. Timoshenko and G. K. Zhukov do not react to this in any way. It is absolutely impossible to allow this situation, knowing the cool character of G.K. Zhukov.

Before me is the capital work of retired colonel-general Yuri Alexandrovich Gorkov "Kremlin, Headquarters, General Staff", who developed it for seven years, being a consultant for the historical-archival and military-memorial center of the General Staff. At that time, my good friend Colonel

V. B. Makovsky worked in this center, who helped Gorkov in every possible way in collecting and analyzing the necessary archival documents and

even defended his Ph.D. thesis on the initial period of the Great Patriotic War. I have no reason not to trust these people, and therefore, to the work of

Yu.A. Gorkov, I will contact more than once.

Yuri Alexandrovich, in the appendix to his book, gives an extract from the logs of visits to I.V. Stalin in his Kremlin office since 1935. It follows from this journal that S.K. Timoshenko, G.K. Zhukov, K.A. Meretskov and P.V. Rychagov (head of the Main Directorate of the Air Force) was at the reception of I. V. Stalin on February 2 and deliberated for almost two hours.

The next time they, as well as S.M. Budyonny and Chetverikov visited this high office on February 12 to approve the mobilization plan.

On February 22, at a meeting with I.V. Stalin, in addition to S.K. Timoshenko, G.K. Zhukova, S.M. Budyonny, K.A. Meretskova, P.V. Rychagov, were present from the military G.I. Kulik (Head of the Main Directorate of Artillery of the Red Army) and the famous test pilot General M.M. Gromov (head of the Flight Research Institute), as well as the entire Politburo of the RCP (b). This meeting was held from 17.15 to 21.00.

On February 25, S. K. Timoshenko, G. K. Zhukov, K. A. Meretskov, P. V. Rychagov, as well as the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Main Directorate of the Red Army Air Force, General F. A. Astakhov. The presence of two leading military pilots at a meeting with the head of state indicates either special tasks for this branch of the Armed Forces, or some important information received from air reconnaissance. The discussion of these issues took almost two hours.

On March 1, S. K. Timoshenko, G. K. Zhukov,

K. A. Meretskov, P. V. Rychagov, G. I. Kulik, as well as the first deputy commander of the Air Force of the Red Army, General P. F. Zhigarev and a member of the Economic Council for the Defense Industry under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR P. N. Goremykin. The meeting takes 2 hours and 45 minutes.

On March 8, S. K. Timoshenko, G. K. Zhukov, S. M. Budyonny, P. V. Rychagov arrived at a meeting with I. V. Stalin at 20.05 and consulted until 23.00.

The next meeting with the military at I.V. Stalin took place on March 17, 1941, and was attended by S.K. Timoshenko, G.K. Zhukov, K.A. Meretskov, P.V. Rychagov, P.F. Zhigarev. They conferred from 15.15 to 23.10, but, apparently, they did not finally agree. Therefore, the next day, S.K. were invited to the head of state. Timoshenko, G.K. Zhukov, P. V. Rychagov and G. I. Kulik, who were in the office of I. V. Stalin from 19.05 to 21.10, as a result of this meeting, the Politburo adopted a resolution on mobilization fees No. 28/155, prepared as early as March 3, 1941 .

And now we are reading from G.K. Zhukov about the report of the chief of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff to the leadership of the country dated March 20, 1941. Prior to this, S. K. Timoshenko and G. K. Zhukov spent more than 30 hours each in the office of I. V. Stalin at various meetings. Was this time really not enough to discuss the issues of the country's defense and the combat readiness of the Red Army?

So, according to the memoirs of G.K. Zhukov, at the meeting on March 20, based only on the report of General F.I. Golikov, the threat of an attack by fascist Germany on the USSR in 1941 was dispelled. But further in the same work, Georgy Konstantinovich writes: "May 6, 1941



N. G. Kuznetsov, People's Commissar of the Navy, sent a note to I. V. Stalin: "Naval attache in Berlin, Captain 1st Rank Vorontsov reports that, co the words of one German officer from Hitler's headquarters, the Germans are preparing an invasion by May 14 V USSR through Finland, the Baltic states and Romania. At the same time, powerful air raids on Moscow and Leningrad and parachute landings in border centers are planned ... I believe, the note said, that the information is false and was specifically sent along this channel in order to check how the USSR would react to this. .

And again we return to the monograph by Yu.A. Gorkov. According to her data, S.K. Timoshenko, G.K. Zhukov and other top military leaders conferred with I.V. Stalin on April 5, 9, 10, 14, 20, 21, 23, 28, 29 April. At the last meeting, a note by the People's

Commissariat of Defense on the combat readiness of the western border military districts was discussed. And again, a completely logical question arises: what did the top military leaders talk about with the head of state for many hours, if not about the growing threat of war? Why then, according to the notes of G.K. Zhukov: "... Tension was growing. And the closer the threat of war approached, the harder the leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense worked. The leadership of the People's Commissariat and the General Staff, especially Marshal S. K. Timoshenko, at that time worked 18-19 hours a day. Often the people's commissar stayed in his office until the morning.

The work, judging by the notes of Yu. A. Gorkov, was indeed intense. In May 1941, S. K. Timoshenko and G. K. Zhukov confer with I. V. Stalin 10, 12, 14, 19, 23

numbers. On May 24, people are invited to a meeting with the head of state, except for the people's commissar of defense

And

chief of the General Staff, commanders, members of the Military Council and commanders of the Air Force of the Western Special, Kyiv Special, Baltic, Odessa military districts. This meeting has been going on for over three hours.

In early June 1941, on the 3rd, 6th, and 11th, I.V. Stalin had a meeting with S.K. Timoshenko and G.K. Zhukov, as well as often the head of the Operations Directorate of the General Staff, General N.F. Vatutin. The presence of the latter speaks of the preparation of the most important operational documents, probably related to bringing the troops into combat readiness.

But here again we open the memoirs of G.K. Zhukov and read: "On June 13, S.K. Timoshenko called I.V.

cover plans.

"Let's think about it," JV Stalin answered.

The next day, we again visited V.I. Stalin and reported to him about the anxious mood in the districts and the need to bring the troops to full combat readiness.

- Do you propose to mobilize the country, raise troops now and move them to the western borders? This is war! Do you both understand this or not?!"

According to G.K. Zhukov, J.V. Stalin and on June 14 decisively rejected the proposal of the People's Commissar of Defense and the Chief of the General Staff to bring the troops into combat readiness.

According to Yu. A. Gorkov, in the period from June 11 to June 19, neither S. K. Timoshenko nor G. K. Zhukov visited the head of state. But it is known that at the end of the first half of June 1941, the advancement of military formations located in the interior regions of the western border military districts, closer to the state border, began. Part

these formations were transferred by rail, and a significant number of them were put forward in marching order by night crossings.

Also, as early as mid-May 1941, a gradual transfer by rail and partly marching order of individual rifle corps and divisions from the internal military districts: Ural, Volga, Kharkov and North Ural to the border of the Western Dvina and Dnieper rivers began. In the first half of June began

transfer of six divisions from the Trans-Baikal Military District to the Right-Bank Ukraine  
v  
districts of Shepetovka, Proskurov and Berdichev.

Thus, preparing to repel fascist aggression, the Soviet leadership deployed troops of three military districts and part of the forces of the Odessa military district on the western border from the Baltic to the Black Sea, which, in the event of a war, were to be transformed into fronts and a separate army.

Based on this balance of forces and means, the fascist command planned, having achieved surprise, with the available aviation forces to suppress Soviet aviation at airfields and disorganize the control of tank formations on the first day of the war and prevent the organized occupation of their areas by troops. Then, blocking the garrisons of the fortified areas, after a powerful fire defeat, deliver strong blows by ground troops in selected directions, quickly penetrate into the Soviet defenses and defeat the troops covering the state border in parts. In the event of counterattacks by mechanized corps on the second third day of the war, defeat them with air strikes, field and anti-tank artillery fire and ground forces formations. After that, the fascist command intended to rapidly develop the offensive to the east, preventing the organized withdrawal of troops covering the state border to the rear lines and destroying the advancing front reserves.

The enemy's idea was based on the latest for that time theory of conducting an offensive on the principle of a deep offensive operation. The stake was placed on aviation, which was supposed to disrupt command and control and tie down operational reserves, as well as on the strength of the initial strike of ground forces in

selected directions and the development of the offensive by tank formations. But all this was to bring success only in one case - the achievement of surprise. And at the same time, not only the day and hour before the onset, but every minute were of great importance.

I

On the afternoon of June 21, 1941, A. Hitler sat down at his desk in the new Wolfschanze underground headquarters, located in a gloomy forest near Rastenburg in East Prussia, and dictated a long letter to Mussolini. It started like this:

"Duce!

I am writing this letter to you at a time when months of anxious reflection and constant intense expectation are culminating in the most difficult decision I have ever made in my life.

Situation: England lost this war. Like a drowning man, she clutches at any straw. Nevertheless, some of her hopes are not unfounded... The defeat of France makes the British warmongers turn their eyes to where they are trying to start the war: to the Soviet Union.

Both sides—Soviet Russia and England—are equally interested in a Europe... exhausted by a long war. The United States of America is behind these two countries, inciting them...

...All available Russian forces are at our border...If circumstances force me to send German air forces against England, then there is a danger that Russia will then resort to a strategy of blackmail and I will be forced to silently yield because of her superiority in the air... England will be even less ready to conclude peace, because then it will be possible to pin their hopes on a Russian partner... And behind all this there are massive deliveries of military materials from America, which they hope to receive in 1942...

The situation in England itself is bad; the supply of food and raw materials is becoming more and more difficult. The mood to continue the war persists mainly only in dreams.

These dreams are based on two premises: Russia and America. We have no chance of eliminating America, but it is in our power to eliminate Russia...

Given these circumstances, I decided to put an end to the hypocritical activities of the Kremlin...

As for the air war against England, we shall be on the defensive for the time being.

As for the war in the East, Duce, it will certainly be difficult, but I do not doubt for a minute that it will be a huge success. First of all, I hope that we can get a common food supply base in the Ukraine, which will provide us with such additional supplies as may be needed in the future ...

Whatever happens, Duce, our situation cannot worsen as a result of this step, it can only improve ... Partnership with the Soviet Union, despite the sincerity of our desires to achieve final reconciliation, turned out to be something for me

no less intolerable, because somehow it is unacceptable to me because of my origin, my concepts and my past obligations, and now I am happy, having got rid of this mental anguish.

## A Sound of Thunder...

Ivot came on June 22, 1941. During this tense time, the Soviet leadership actually continued to be inactive. Alarming intelligence reports that came to the Kremlin from all over silently settled on the tables of cabinet officials, only in a distorted form and with a great delay reaching the office of I.V. Stalin.

In the writings of a number of authors, there is an assertion that the news of the beginning of the war for I.V. Stalin was completely unexpected and that he was at a loss even at first. This is hardly true. That night, I. V. Stalin was waiting for disturbing news from the western borders, he himself was at his workplace, there were

All

senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Commissariat of Defense, the General Staff, the headquarters of the military districts and the armies covering the state border.

At 9:30 p.m., seven hours before the start of the German aggression against the USSR, V. M. Molotov received the German Ambassador Schulenburg in his office in the Kremlin for another explanation. Later, having learned about this meeting, W. Churchill would call it "the last stupidity."

"There are a number of signs," said Molotov, "that the German government

dissatisfied with the Soviet government. There are even rumors that there is a threat of war between Germany and the Soviet Union.

The Soviet government was unable to understand the reasons for Germany's discontent. I would be grateful if Mr. Ambassador would explain to me what led to the present state of German-Soviet relations?

"I cannot answer your questions, Mr. Minister, because I do not have the relevant information," Schulenburg answered. "But I promise that I will immediately contact Berlin and report your concern ...

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the German Ambassador to the USSR broke up that late evening without agreeing on anything. Poor awareness of V. M. Molotov or

Schulenburg regarding Germany's intention to attack the USSR in a few hours is logically excluded, but many historians claim this is exactly what. Let's leave it up to them...

Returning to the embassy, Schulenburg received a radiogram from Ribbentrop from Berlin marked "top secret, state secret, ambassadorially." IN

it stated: "With the receipt of this telegram, all encryption materials must be destroyed. The radio needs to be deactivated. Immediately inform Mr. Molotov that you need to send him an urgent message. Then make the following statement to him..."

What followed was a lengthy text explaining the reasons for the German attack on

THE USSR. It was said that at a time when Germany strictly complies with the terms of the Soviet-German treaty, the Soviet Union repeatedly violated them, carrying out "subversive activities, terrorism and espionage." He "fought against Germany's efforts to establish a stable order in Europe", entered into an agreement with England in order to carry out "an attack on German troops in Romania and Bulgaria, concentrating all

available Russian forces on a long front from the Baltic to the Black Sea and threatening the Reich. The statement went on to say:

"Reports received over the past few days eliminate any doubt about the aggressive nature of such a concentration of Russian troops ... In addition, there are reports from England about the negotiations of

Ambassador Cripps on closer political and military cooperation between England and the Soviet Union.

Summarizing the above, the government of the Reich in this regard declares that the Soviet government, contrary to its obligations:

- 1) not only continued, but intensified their attempts to undermine Germany and Europe;
- 2) pursued an increasingly anti-German foreign policy;
- 3) concentrated all its forces in readiness on the border with Germany.

Thus, the Soviet government tore up its treaties with Germany and is trying to attack her from the rear.

In this regard, the Führer ordered the German armed forces to counter this threat with all the means at their disposal.

At the end of the radiogram, Ribbentrop warned the ambassador not to enter into any explanations about this statement.

Of course, this was a blow to Schulenburg, who had worked in Moscow for quite a long time, did a lot to improve Soviet-German relations and knew that the Soviet Union was not preparing for an attack on Germany at the moment. But with purely German punctuality, he followed the instructions of his boss. Arriving at the Kremlin just before dawn, he met with V. M. Molotov and limited himself to reading the text of the statement. V.M. Molotov listened to the ambassador in silence to the end and then said:

- This is a war. Do you think we deserve it?

Schulenburg silently spread his hands... His diplomatic activity as an ambassador practically ended in failure. The states, between which he acted as a mediator, did not agree among themselves, and the war meant a complete break in diplomatic relations.

relations. Returning to Germany, Schulenburg resigned and joined the opposition. After the July 1944 conspiracy against Hitler, he was arrested and soon executed by the Gestapo.

In the same pre-dawn hour, a similar scene was taking place on the Wilhelmstrasse in Berlin. Throughout the afternoon of June 21, the Soviet ambassador to Germany, Vladimir Dekanozov, called the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, seeking an appointment with Ribbentrop in order to hand him a protest over continued violations of the Soviet border.

German aircraft. He was told that the Minister of Foreign Affairs was not in the city. Finally, at 2 a.m. on June 22, Dekanozov was informed that Ribbentrop would receive him at 4 a.m. at

ministry of foreign affairs.

The memories of Dr. Schmidt, Ribbentrop's assistant, remained about this historic meeting. In particular, he writes:

"I have never seen Ribbentrop so excited as five minutes before Dekanozov's arrival. He paced nervously back and forth in his office like a caged animal..."

Dekanozov was led into the office, and he, probably not suspecting anything, inopportunely held out his hand to Ribbentrop. We sat down...

Dekanozov, on behalf of his government, began to set forth specific questions requiring clarification. However, as soon as he spoke, Ribbentrop, with a petrified face, interrupted him: "Now it doesn't matter ..."

Ribbentrop then handed the ambassador a copy of the memorandum which Schulenburg had read out in Moscow at about the same time.

Refined diplomacy was replaced by brute force, and there came a time when the guns had to speak.

Let us turn to the memoirs of G. K. Zhukov: "In the evening of June 21, the chief of staff of the Kiev military district, Lieutenant-General M. A. Purkaev, called me and reported that a defector, a German sergeant major, had come to the border guards, claiming that German troops were leaving for the initial areas for offensive, which will begin on the morning of June 22. I immediately reported to the People's Commissar and I. V. Stalin what M. A. Purkaev had conveyed. I. V. Stalin

said:

- Come with the people's commissar to the Kremlin.

Having taken with us a draft directive to the troops, together with the People's Commissar and Lieutenant General N. F. Vatutin, we went to the Kremlin. On the way, we agreed at all costs to achieve a decision to put the troops on combat readiness.

JV Stalin met us alone. He was clearly concerned.

"But didn't the German generals plant this defector in order to provoke a conflict?" - he asked.

- No, - answered S. K. Timoshenko. We believe the defector is telling the truth.

Meanwhile, members of the Politburo entered the office of I.V. Stalin.

- What do we do? - asked I. V. Stalin.

There was no answer.

"We must immediately issue a directive to the troops to bring all the border troops to full combat readiness," said the people's commissar.

— Read! - answered I. V. Stalin.

I have read the draft directive. I. V. Stalin remarked:

"It is premature to give such a directive now, perhaps the issue will be settled peacefully. It is necessary to give a short directive in which it is indicated that the attack can begin with provocative actions of the German units. The troops of the border districts should not succumb to any provocations, so as not to cause complications.

Wasting no time, N. F. Vatutin and I went into another room and quickly drew up a draft directive of the people's commissar.

Returning to the office, they asked permission to report.

JV Stalin, having listened to the draft directive and read it again himself, made some amendments and handed it over to the people's commissar for signature.

We turn to the study of Yu. A. Gorkov. On June 21, in the office of I. V. Stalin from 18.27 was the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR V. M. Molotov, who reported on the preparation of Germany's aggression. At 19.05, K. E. Voroshilov, L. P. Beria, N. A. Voznesensky, G. M. Malenkov, N. G. Kuznetsov, S. K. Timoshenko entered this office and stayed there for different times. N. A. Voznesensky, N. G. Kuznetsov and S. K. Timoshenko were the first to leave the office at 20.15. At 20.5 °C. K. Timoshenko returned to I. V. Stalin together with G. K. Zhukov and S. M. Budyonny. At 21.55 L. Z. Mekhlis was also invited to this office. G. M. Malenkov, S. K. Timoshenko, G. K. Zhukov, S. M. Budyonny and L. Z.

Mekhlis left the leader's office at 22.20, after signing Directive No. 1 to the western border districts. After their departure, V. M.

Molotov, K. E. Voroshilov, and L. P. Beria stayed at J. V. Stalin until 23.00. No N.F.

Vatutin was not at Stalin's that evening, and, apparently, G.K. Zhukov personally went to convey the directive to the troops after 22.20 on June 21, 1941.

And one more question - the time of sending the directive to the troops.

We open the 93rd page of the book by A. M. Vasilevsky (before the war - deputy chief of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff) "The Work of All Life" and find the following:

"In June 1941, reports from the operational departments of the western border districts and armies were constantly sent to the General Staff, one more disturbing. The concentration of German troops near our borders is over. The enemy in a number of sections of the border began to dismantle the wire obstacles he had previously set up and to clear the strips of mines on the ground, clearly preparing passages for his troops to our positions. Large tank groupings of the Germans are being withdrawn to their starting areas. At night, the noise of a mass of tank engines is clearly audible.

All the employees of our operational department, without any orders from above, were almost non-stop in those days at their official places.

At one o'clock in the morning on June 22, we were ordered to urgently hand over the directive signed by the People's Commissar of Defense and by him from the Chief of the General Staff G.K.

... At 0 hours 30 minutes on June 22, 1941, the directive was sent to the districts.

And the situation heated up every hour and every minute.

"At about 12 o'clock at night, the commander of the Kiev district, who was at his command post in Ternopil, reported on the HF that in addition to the defector, who was reported by General M. A. Purkaev, another German soldier appeared in our units - the 222nd Infantry Regiment 74th Infantry Division, - writes G.K. Zhukov in his memoirs. - He

swam across the river, appeared to the border guards and said that at 4 o'clock the German troops would go on the offensive. M.P. Kirponos was ordered to quickly transfer the directive to the troops about putting them on alert."

From the Kremlin to the building of the General Staff, 5-10 minutes by car. Why such an important document as a directive on bringing troops to combat readiness, the General Staff passed to the districts for two whole hours, remains a mystery. Apparently, not short prearranged signals were transmitted, requiring the immediate opening of pre-laid packages and actions in accordance with pre-worked out plans (as is customary), but lengthy conversations were carried out, full of reinsurance, warnings and in need of a lot of time.

But what did I. V. Stalin himself do at that time? Colonel General D. A. Volkogonov, head of the Institute of Military History and adviser to B. N. Yeltsin, writes in his work "Triumph and Tragedy": "At 3 o'clock in the morning, Stalin looked tiredly out of the window of his armored car at the deserted streets. He did not yet know that German planes were already flying to bomb

Soviet cities and airfields, that the crews of German tanks bring their cars to

starting positions that Hitler's generals are increasingly looking at the dials of their hours.

Their arrows are approaching the fatal mark. But as soon as Stalin began to fall asleep, having laid out the bed on the sofa in his office at the dacha, where he worked and rested, there was a gentle knock on the door. The knock sounded painfully in the heart: Stalin was never woken up. The worst must have happened. Had he miscalculated? Stalin left. The head of security reported:

- Army General Zhukov asks you, Comrade Stalin, on urgent business to the phone!

Stalin approached the apparatus.

- I'm listening...

Zhukov briefly reported on enemy air raids on Kyiv, Minsk, Sevastopol, Vilnius and other cities. After the report, the Chief of the General Staff asked Stalin again:

- Do you understand me, Comrade Stalin?

Stalin was silent. And from the tube again followed the question:

Comrade Stalin, do you understand me?

It was four o'clock in the morning on June 22, 1941. The Great Patriotic War has begun."

Thus, it turns out that, expecting an attack from Germany, the Soviet Union pursued a dual policy. The positive aspect of this policy was that the Soviet leadership tried with all its might, pushing the western border,



to create

a kind of buffer between the USSR and Germany, which was supposed to reduce the force of the enemy's initial strike and create conditions for the mobilization and deployment of the main forces of the first strategic echelon.

Negative - a miscalculation at the beginning of German aggression, poor enemy reconnaissance, low rates of development of their documents for defense and the creation of defense along the new border.

At the same time, the Soviet leadership was preparing for the upcoming war, preparing for it the People's Commissariat of Defense, the General Staff, and through them the troops. In 1939 - early 1941

gg.

at the western border, a lot of work was done to increase the country's defense capability. Unfortunately, due to lack of time and funds, this work was not completed. There was no reliable information about the preparation of aggression by

Germany. There was also a big delay in the development of the main military-strategic documents.

According to official Soviet data, by the beginning of the war, 190 divisions, 5,500 thousand personnel, 47,200 guns and mortars were concentrated against the Soviet Union, near

4300 tanks and assault guns, almost 5000 combat aircraft from Germany, Finland, Romania and Hungary.

It is recorded in the history of the Second World War that by the middle of 1941, in accordance with the country's defense plan, the Soviet Army and Navy were increasing. In June 1941, the strength of the armed forces of the USSR reached 5373 thousand people ... The army was armed with over 67 thousand field guns and mortars, 1861 tanks and over 2700 combat aircraft of new types. In addition, the troops had a large

quantity

obsolete armored and aviation equipment.

These figures require some clarification. As of June 21, 1941, there were 4,827,000 people on the lists of the Red Army. There were 768 thousand people on the lists of reservists. In addition, 75 thousand people assigned to the People's Commissariat of Defense served in other departments. This means that in the event of the outbreak of war, 5670 thousand people could immediately be put under arms. Thus, the figures for the strength of the personnel of the Soviet

Armed Forces at the beginning of the war, indicated in the official Soviet publications, differ from each other by 300,000 people.

By June 22, 1941, the Red Army had 22.6 thousand tanks, 112.8 thousand guns and mortars of various calibers. The number of aircraft fleet of the Red Army, various researchers indicate from 20 to 22 thousand aircraft of various types.

As a result, according to the History of the Second World War, it turned out that Germany

outnumbered the USSR more than twice in the number of tanks, almost twice in the number of aircraft, and one and a half times inferior in the number of field guns and mortars.

On the western border of the USSR from the Baltic to the Black Sea on June 22, 1941, the troops of the North-Western, Western, South-Western fronts and one of the armies of the Odessa Military District were deployed.

Northwestern Front (commanded by Colonel General F.I. Kuznetsov) consisting of the 8th (Major General P.P. Sobennikov), 11th (commanded by Lieutenant General V.I. Morozov) and 27th reserve (Major General N.E. Berzarin) of the armies, as well as the 16th and 67th rifle divisions, designed to protect the coast of the Baltic Sea. In total, the front included 25 divisions, of which 19 rifle, 4 tank and 2 motorized rifle.

Western Front (commander General of the Army D. G. Pavlov) consisting of the 3rd (commander Lieutenant General V. N. Kuznetsov), 10th (commander Major General K. D. Golubev), 4th (commander General - Major A. A. Korobkov) armies. The 13th Army (commanded by Major General P. M. Filatov), the 47th Rifle, 17th and 20th Mechanized Corps were in the reserve of the front. In total, there were 44 divisions in the front, including

including 24 rifle, 12 tank, 6 motorized rifle and 2 cavalry.

The most powerful in terms of the composition of the troops was the South-Western Front, which also included four combined arms armies and front-line troops. Directly along the line of the state border, the 5th (commander Major General of the Tank Troops M.I. Potapov), 6th (commander Lieutenant General I.N. Muzychenko), 26th (commander Lieutenant General F.N. . Kostenko) and the 12th (commanded by Major General P. G. Ponedelin) Army. In the reserve of the front were the 31st, 36th, 37th, 49th rifle, 15th, 9th, 19th, 24th mechanized corps and the 14th cavalry division. Total in

This front consisted of 49 divisions, including 26 rifle, 14 tank, 7 motorized rifle and 2 cavalry divisions.

In the south, the immediate protection of the state border of the USSR with Romania in case of war was entrusted to the 9th Army of the Odessa Military District (commanded by Colonel General Ya. T. Cherevichenko). This army included three rifle, one cavalry and one mechanized corps. In addition, another

separate rifle corps was stationed on the Crimean Peninsula, and there were two more rifle corps in the reserve of the Odessa Military District. Total in case of deployment of the Southern Front

v

it could consist of 31 divisions, including 19 rifle, 6 tank, 3 motorized rifle and 3 cavalry divisions.

Thus, all the western fronts included 170 divisions, including 130 rifle, 40 tank, 20 motorized rifle and 7 cavalry divisions.

The Soviet command created ten army formations to directly cover the state border, which included 788.8 thousand people, 7.9 thousand tanks, more than 5 thousand guns of 76-mm and higher caliber, almost 8 thousand mortars, 4.6 thousand anti-tank guns, 532 anti-aircraft guns. To cover the ground group from the air, the armies were allocated 6.5 thousand aircraft.

The enemy, preparing for the start of aggression, in the troops of the first strategic echelon had more than two million people, 2887 tanks, 10.5 thousand guns of caliber over 76 mm, 14.9 thousand mortars, 8.9 thousand anti-tank guns, 2115 anti-aircraft artillery guns. To cover the ground grouping from the air, a little more than

four thousand aircraft.

As a result, the enemy outnumbered the Soviet troops in terms of personnel by 2.6 times, by artillery guns by 2 times, by mortars by 1.8 times, by anti-aircraft guns by 3.9 times, but inferior to tanks by 2.7 times. In addition, the

19th Army from the North Caucasian Military District, the 20th Army from the Oryol Military District, the 21st Army from the

Volga Military District, 22 1st Army - from the Urals Military District and the 16th Army - from the Trans-Baikal Military District, which were to form the Reserve of the Main

Commands. These reserve armies included 81 divisions, including 57 rifle, 16 tank and 8 motorized divisions, as well as

units of corps subordination. These are hundreds of thousands of people, thousands of artillery pieces, tanks, vehicles. For the transfer of these associations by rail, thousands of military trains were required, which went west along the same tracks and through the same railway stations as civilian trains.

For the arriving troops in the areas of unloading, large areas were needed, premises for accommodating personnel and warehouses. Like mushrooms, tent cities grew, carefully guarded areas. Thousands of soldiers suddenly

appeared in previously quiet towns and villages. It was impossible to hide it.

In total, 251 divisions out of 303 available in the Red Army were ready for the active army by the beginning of the war. The remaining 52 divisions were left at the points of permanent deployment on

case of covering the northern, southern and Far Eastern borders.

The preparation of the Nazi troops for an attack on the Soviet Union at exactly 4 o'clock in the morning on June 22, 1941 was known to many heads of border detachments. Then information began to come in that on the adjacent side the noise of motors was heard, the sound of carts, the headlights of cars were visible. These data began to come to the heads of the border troops of the Belarusian, Ukrainian and Moldavian border districts. At 2 o'clock on June 22, they were reported to the head of the Main Directorate of the Border Troops, who was at that time at the site of the 87th Border Detachment of the Belarusian Border District, and to his deputy in the Main Directorate of the Border Troops (Moscow). None of them reacted properly to this information, did not give an order to the border units to occupy the defensive structures. And to give such an order they

had

opportunity, because there was no ban on the occupation of defensive structures by border guards at that time.

The border detachments did not receive such an order even after

How

The General Staff ordered the western military districts to put into effect a plan to cover the state border.

For every Soviet person, the Great Patriotic War, depending on the position held, began in different ways. Most of the works of the Soviet period speak of a sudden and insidious attack by fascist Germany. The falsifiers of modern history argue that with his offensive, A. Hitler disrupted the impending offensive of the Soviet troops on the territory of Germany and Romania. I. V. Stalin and the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Marshal of the Soviet Union S. K. Timoshenko did not leave their memories of June 22, 1941. Therefore, we open the memoirs of the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army of that time, General of the Army G.K. Zhukov:

"At 3 hours 17 minutes, the commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Admiral F. S. Oktyabrsky, called me via HF and said: "The fleet's VNOS system reports on the approach from the sea of a large number of unknown aircraft; The fleet is in full combat readiness. I ask for instructions."

- Your choice? I asked.

"There is only one solution: to meet the aircraft with fleet air defense fire," the admiral replied.

After talking with S. K. Timoshenko, I answered F. S. Oktyabrsky: "Act and report to your people's commissar."

At 03:30, the chief of staff of the Western District, General V. E. Klimovskikh, reported on a German air raid on the cities of Belarus. Three minutes later, the chief of staff of the Kyiv district, General M.A. Purkaev, reported on an air raid on the cities of Ukraine. At 0340, the commander of the Baltic District, General F. I. Kuznetsov, called and reported on enemy air raids on Kaunas and other cities.

The People's Commissar ordered me to call I. V. Stalin. I'm calling. Nobody answers the phone. I call continuously. Finally, I hear the sleepy voice of the guard general on duty. I ask him to call I. V. Stalin to the phone.

About three minutes later I.V. Stalin answered the phone.

I reported the situation and asked permission to start retaliatory hostilities. JV Stalin is silent. I hear his breath.

- Do you understand me?

Again silence.

Finally, I. V. Stalin asked:

- Where is the commissar?

- He speaks with the Kyiv district on HF.

- Come to the Kremlin with Tymoshenko. Tell Poskrebyshchev to call all the members of the Politburo."

There are several serious inconsistencies here.

First. At the end of 1937, the People's Commissariat of the Navy was created, headed by Admiral N. G. Kuznetsov from April 1939 to February 1946. The commander of the Black Sea Fleet, first of all, had to request his headquarters and act in accordance with his instructions, and only then inform the General Staff.

Second. I. V. Stalin had his own secretariat, and a general on duty was constantly around him. Their direct task was to notify members of the Politburo about being summoned to the Kremlin.

So, in the early predawn hour of June 22, 1941, the night outfits and patrols of the Soviet border guards, who guarded the western state border of the Soviet Union, unexpectedly noted a strange celestial phenomenon - over the territory of neighboring Poland, captured by the Nazis, far on its western edge in the already begun

lighten up

the sky suddenly appeared new, hitherto unknown stars. Unusually bright and colorful, they floated non-stop in a motley

flock to the east. Soon from the same place from the west

overheard

the roar of many hundreds of aircraft engines. Hundreds of German planes with side lights lit up rapidly invaded the airspace of the Soviet Union, carrying their deadly cargo to pre-determined targets. And within a few minutes, the first dropped enemy bombs began to explode in the areas of border outposts and nearby military towns. The quarters of the border towns blazed brightly.

According to other official data, at 03:30 on June 22, 1941, the first wave of German bombers, consisting of 30 selected crews flying in groups of 3 aircraft, crossed the western border of the Soviet Union. Having invaded Soviet territory, the bombers were on course for their intended targets at the moment when German artillery signaled the start of an offensive by ground troops. 30 bombers of the first wave in the morning twilight struck ten Soviet airfields.

With this

blow, the fascist command hoped to sow panic at the advanced Soviet air bases.

At sunrise, the main forces of the German Air Force, consisting of 500 bombers, 270 dive bombers, 480 fighters, attacked 66 airfields, on which almost 3/4 of Soviet aviation was concentrated.

Thus, the Great Patriotic War began with massive air strikes. On June 22 and in the following two days, fascist aviation continuously, wave after wave, with an interval of 5-25 minutes, in groups of 5-6 to 60 aircraft attacked airfields. The main blow was dealt to a depth of 150-200 kilometers, but the depth of the Nazi aviation these days reached 400-500

kilometers from the front line.

We read further the memoirs of G.K. Zhukov:

"At 4:30 in the morning, all the summoned members of the Politburo were assembled. Me and the people's commissar were invited to the office.

JV Stalin was pale and sat at the table, holding a pipe stuffed with tobacco in his hands. He said:

"We must urgently call the German embassy.

The embassy replied that Count Schulenburg asked to receive him for urgent

messages.

V. M. Molotov was instructed to receive the ambassador.

Meanwhile, the First Deputy Chief of the General Staff, General N.F. Vatutin, reported that the German ground forces after heavy artillery fire on

a number of sections of the northwestern and western directions went on the offensive.

After some time, V. M. Molotov quickly entered the office:

The German government has declared war on us.

JV Stalin lowered his head and thought deeply.

There was a long pause.

I ventured to break the protracted silence and suggested that all the forces available in the border districts immediately fall upon the enemy units that had broken through and delay their further advance.

"Not to detain, but to destroy," said S. K. Timoshenko.

"Give us a directive," said I. V. Stalin.

At 7:15 a.m. on June 22, the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 2 was transferred to the districts ... "

Once again, it is appropriate to pose a very important question - how did the Great Patriotic War begin? Was the attack of the German troops on the USSR completely unexpected? For whom was it unexpected? There are several versions on this issue.

The first, the official Soviet one: the attack of fascist Germany was unexpected and treacherous. This means that the war began without its announcement, surprise was achieved at all levels: strategic, operational, tactical. This version

has weaknesses, since the Soviet government was repeatedly reported on the preparation of Germany for a war against the USSR on the basis of intelligence information from various sources. Even an inexperienced politician knows that such information, even if it does not deserve absolute trust, needs very serious consideration.

The second, based on documents and research: the Soviet government and the high command of the Red Army knew about Germany's preparations for war, but took only partial responses. As a result, there is no need to talk about

strategic and not even operational surprise. All that remains is tactical surprise. And this is nothing more than the unsatisfactory information and organizational work of the General Staff of the Red Army, the headquarters of the western military districts and the armies of the direct cover of the state border.

Third, V. Rezun and some historians (Yu. G. Felshtinsky): the entire legal procedure for declaring war by Germany was completed, and the aggression itself became a forced measure of the German government against the actions of the USSR government. According to him, "exactly at 4 am, the Imperial Minister of Foreign Affairs handed over to the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Plenipotentiary Representative of the USSR in Germany, Vladimir Dekanozov, a memorandum outlining the reasons for the German attack on the USSR. The delivery of this memorandum was an act of declaring war. This is true, but we should not forget that by that time the war was already raging with might and main on the entire Soviet-German border.

In my opinion, the first and second versions, having merged together, are the most true. The top Soviet leadership knew about the preparations for German aggression, but believed that the war would begin much later, or that it would be preceded by a period of many days from the declaration of war to its start. People's Commissar of Defense, Chief of the General Staff, commanders of military districts and armies, corps commanders thought more not about the security of the country, but about preserving their own chairs and heads. The commanders of divisions and regiments, whose formations and units were located at a distance of 30-50 km from the state border, for the most part did not

knew.

The version of V. Rezun about the official declaration of war on the Soviet Union by Germany at 4 am on June 22 has no legal significance and is regarded as a statement of a fait accompli.

We will try to compile a picture of the situation in the top leadership of the USSR on the first day of the Great Patriotic War on the basis of several sources.

At 07:15 (according to the memoirs of G.K. Zhukov), the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 2 was handed over to the troops, demanding to destroy the enemy who had penetrated.

By 8 o'clock in the morning on June 22, the General Staff found that the airfields of all border districts had been bombed, and the rifle formations of the armies covering the state border had been alerted. At this time "S. K. Timoshenko called I. V. Stalin and asked permission to come to the Kremlin to report on the draft Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on mobilization in the country and the formation of the

Headquarters of the High Command, writes G. K. Zhukov. - At 9 o'clock, the people's commissar and I arrived at the Kremlin. Half an hour later, I. V. Stalin received us. After reading the draft Decree on the conduct of mobilization and partially reducing its size, outlined by the General Staff, I.V. Stalin handed over the Decree to A.N. Poskrebyshev for approval by the Presidium of the Supreme Council.

12 hours. Speech on the radio by V. M. Molotov. He said: "At dawn on June 22, 1941, the regular troops of the German army attacked our border units on the front from the Baltic to the Black Sea and were held back by them during the first half of the day. From the second half of the day, the German troops met with the advanced units of the field troops of the Red Army. After fierce fighting, the enemy was repulsed with heavy losses. Only in the Grodno and Krystynopol directions did the enemy manage to achieve minor tactical successes and take the towns of Kalvaria, Stoyanuv and Tsekhanoviec, the first two 15 km and the last 10 km from the border.

Enemy aircraft attacked a number of our airfields, but everywhere they met with a rebuff from our fighters and anti-aircraft artillery, which inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. We shot down 65 enemy planes."

13 hours. G. K. Zhukov writes: "At about 13 o'clock on June 22, I. V. Stalin called me and said:

- Our front commanders do not have sufficient experience in directing the combat operations of troops. The leadership decided to send you to the Southwestern Front as a representative of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command ... "

S. K. Timoshenko and G. K. Zhukov on June 22, 1941 were in the office of I. V. Stalin from 5.45 to 8.30 and 14.00 to 16.00.

"By the end of June 22, despite the energetic measures taken, the General Staff was still unable to obtain accurate data about our troops and the enemy from the headquarters of the fronts, armies and the Air Force," writes G.K. Zhukov. - Information about the depth of penetration of the enemy into our territory is rather

contradictory. There are no accurate data on losses in aviation and ground forces. It is only known that the aviation of the Western Front suffered very heavy losses. The General Staff and the people's commissar could not contact the front commanders, Colonel-General F.I. Kuznetsov and Army General D.G. Pavlov, who, without reporting to the people's commissar, left somewhere for the troops. The headquarters of these fronts do not know where

moment are their commanders.

According to aviation reconnaissance, fighting is taking place in the areas of our fortified lines and partly 15-20 kilometers deep in our territory. An attempt by the front headquarters to contact the troops directly was not successful, since with most of the armies

And

there were no wired or radio communications in separate buildings.

Then General N. F. Vatutin said that I. V. Stalin approved the draft Directive No. 3 of the People's Commissar and ordered me to sign it.

- What is the directive? I asked.

- The directive provides for the transition of our troops to counter-offensive actions

with the task of defeating the enemy in the main directions, moreover, with access to enemy territory.

"But we still don't know exactly where and with what forces the enemy delivers his blows," I objected. "Isn't it better to figure out what is happening at the front before morning, and only then make the right decision.

— I share your point of view, but the matter is already settled.

"All right," I said, "put my signature."

This directive was received by the commander of the Southwestern Front at about 12 noon.  
night."

At 10 pm on June 22, 1941, S. K. Timoshenko, G. K. Zhukov and a member of the Main Military Council G. M. Malenkov signed the order of the People's Commissar of Defense to the Military Councils of the North-Western, Western, South-Western and Southern Fronts No. 3 They were informed that the enemy, inflicting the main blows from the Suwalkovsky ledge during  
22

June, "having suffered heavy losses, achieved little success" in a number of areas. "On the remaining sections of the state border, enemy attacks were repulsed with heavy losses for him." The immediate task for June 23-24 was: "encircle and destroy the enemy's Suwalki grouping by the end of June 24 with concentric concentrated strikes by the troops of the North-Western and Western Fronts and capture the Suwalki area by the end of June 24. Powerful concentric strikes by mechanized corps, all aviation of the Southwestern Front and other troops of the 5th and 6th armies

encircle and  
destroy the enemy grouping advancing in the direction of Vladimir-Volynsky, Brody. By the end of June 24, capture the Lublin region.

Judging by these conclusions and decisions, it seems that the Soviet leadership and the high command of the Red Army already on the first day of the Great Patriotic War controlled the situation on the fronts and were able to make specific decisions.

We are watching "Memoirs and Reflections" by G.K. Zhukov. He writes that at 7:15 a.m. Directive No. 2 was handed over to the troops, which ordered "the troops to

and means to fall upon the enemy forces and destroy them in areas where they violated the Soviet border. But she  
immediately warned: "Until further notice by the ground troops, do not cross the border."



Further, G.K. Zhukov writes:

"A little later, we learned that before dawn on June 22, in all the western border districts, wire communications with the troops and headquarters of the districts and armies were disrupted, which were not able to quickly transmit their orders ...

The headquarters of the districts from various sources began to receive the most contradictory information, often of a provocative nature.

The General Staff, in turn, could not obtain truthful information from the headquarters of the districts and troops, and, naturally, this could not but put the High Command and the General Staff in a difficult position at some point ...

At about 1 pm on June 22, I. V. Stalin called me and said:

- Our front commanders do not have sufficient experience in directing the combat operations of troops and, apparently, are somewhat confused. The Politburo has decided to send you to the Southwestern Front as a representative of the Headquarters of the High Command. We will send Marshal Shaposhnikov and Marshal Kulik to the Western Front. I summoned Shaposhnikov and Kulik to my office and gave them instructions. You need to fly immediately to Kyiv and from there, together with Khrushchev, go to the front

headquarters in Ternopil.

I asked:

- And who will lead the General Staff in such a difficult situation?

JV Stalin replied:

Leave Vatutin behind.

Then, somewhat irritably, he added:

"Don't waste your time, we'll manage somehow."

Another important witness is the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR and the former Chief of the General Staff K. A. Meretskov and his work "In the Service of the People". On page 196 of this work it is written:

"... on the afternoon of June 22, I turned on the radio (at that time he was on his way to Leningrad. - Auth.) and heard the speech of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov about the villainous attack of fascist Germany on our country.

Arriving in Leningrad, I immediately went to the headquarters of the district. Major General D.N. Nikishev and Corps Commissar N.N. Klementiev were on the spot, soon

appointed

respectively, as chief of staff and a member of the Military Council of this district ... The commander of the troops of the district, M. M. Popov, at the beginning of the war, inspected some formations of the district ...

There was not a minute to lose. We did not know the plans of the enemy and could therefore expect anything ...

By the evening of June 22, the situation in the Baltics had not improved. However, the district along with

with other districts and fronts received the third directive of the people's commissar of defense. The fighting formations were instructed to go on the offensive and defeat the aggressor ... "

A. M. Vasilevsky, who at the beginning of the war was the Deputy Chief of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army, in his memoirs "The Work of All Life", generally "diplomatically" leaves the description of the events of the first weeks after the start of the Great Patriotic War. This is despite the fact that it was this department that was the main working body for developing plans for strategic operations and monitoring their implementation, despite the fact that the head of the department, General N.F. Vatutin, died in 1944 without leaving any memories, and A. M. Vasilevsky wrote already in the 70s.

In order to look at the events of the beginning of the Great Patriotic War from the other side of the Soviet-German front, we open the military diary of the Chief of the General Staff of the German Ground Forces, Colonel-General F. Halder dated June 22, 1941.

"Morning reports report that all armies, except for the 11th (on the right flank of Army Group South in Romania), went on the offensive according to plan. The offensive of our troops, apparently, was a complete tactical surprise for the enemy on the entire front.

The border bridges across the Bug and other rivers have been everywhere captured by our troops without a fight and in complete safety. The complete surprise of our offensive for the enemy is evidenced by the fact that the units were taken by surprise in the barracks, the planes stood at the airfields, covered with tarpaulin, and the advanced units, suddenly attacked by our troops, asked the command what to do ...

Kinzel, Mitsky:

A. The Russian motorized Pskov group (operational reserve) was discovered 300 km south of the previously assumed area of its concentration. It is located south of the Western Dvina! It's only beneficial for us.

On the confirmation of the dislocation of various Russian units.

A Russian radiogram was intercepted: "The headquarters of the 3rd Army has been defeated. Send fighters...

The Air Force command reported that our air force had destroyed 800 enemy aircraft (1st Air Fleet - 100 aircraft, 2nd Air Fleet - 300 aircraft, 4th Air Force - 400 aircraft). Our aviation managed to mine the approaches to Leningrad from the sea without loss. German losses are still 10

aircraft.

The command of the Army Group "South" reported that our patrols, without encountering resistance, crossed the Prut between Galati and Khushi and between Khushi and Iasi. Bridges are in our hands.

In the afternoon, a report came in about the successful advance of our troops,

especially north of Brest (Gotha group) and on the front of the 4th Panzer Group (Hoepner).

The general picture of the first day of the offensive is as follows.

The offensive of the German troops took the enemy by surprise. The enemy's battle formations were not tactically adapted to defense. His troops in the border zone were scattered over a vast territory and tied to their quartering areas. The security of the border itself was generally weak.

Tactical surprise led to the fact that the resistance of the enemy in the border zone turned out to be weak and disorganized, as a result of which we easily managed to capture bridges across water barriers everywhere and break through the border fortifications to the full depth (fortifications of the field type).

After the initial "tetanus" caused by the suddenness of the attack, the enemy moved to active operations. No doubt there have been instances of tactical withdrawals on the enemy's side, albeit disorderly ones. There are no signs of operational withdrawal. It is likely that the possibility of organizing such a withdrawal was simply excluded.

A number of enemy command authorities, such as, for example, in Bialystok (headquarters of the 10th Army), were completely unaware of the situation, and therefore, in a number of sectors of the front, there was almost no leadership of the actions of the troops from the higher headquarters.

But even regardless of this, given the influence of "tetanus", one can hardly expect that the Russian command, already during the first day of fighting, was able to make itself so

a clear picture of the situation in order to be able to make a radical decision.

It seems that the Russian command, due to its sluggishness, will not be able to organize operational opposition to our offensive in the near future at all.

Our advancing divisions, wherever the enemy tried to offer resistance, threw him back and advanced in combat by an average of 10-12 km! Thus, the way forward for the connections is open."

Translating the memoirs of the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army G.K. Zhukov into a purely military language, we can say that the supreme control body of the Armed Forces of the USSR on the first day of the Great Patriotic War practically did not control the fronts and armies. Directive No. 2 sent by him to the headquarters of the fronts was a reaction to the already existing situation and did not contain any specific instructions to the troops, moreover

same

due to a communication breakdown in its advancement below the headquarters of the fronts, it began to slip. The dispatch of the leaders of the highest levels of command of the Red Army to the fronts was not so much caused by the need for operational leadership of the actions of the troops, as it was an act of desperation - the last attempt to understand the current situation.

Deputy People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR K. A. Meretskov also indirectly confirms the fact that command and control of troops in the Baltics was lost, and the commander of the Leningrad Military District was away on the first day of the war and could not command troops.

Deputy Chief of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army A. M. Vasilevsky generally leaves this topic aside.

Based on this, there is every reason to talk about the violation of command and control of the troops of the western military districts (fronts) in the first days of the war. The commanders and commanders were left to themselves and acted at their own peril and risk within the framework of the pre-war Plan for covering the state border. At the same time, many of them did not understand the real

state of affairs or pretended not to understand. This, in particular, is evidenced by a note from the commander of the 75th Infantry Division of the 4th Army of the Western Front, Major General Nedvigin, dated June 28, 1941. I quote his text without cuts fully.

"Tov. Major General!

Finally, I have the opportunity to drop a few words about the affairs of the past and present.

The red package was late - and hence the whole tragedy. Parts came under attack in scattered groups. Personally, from 22 to 27 he fought with the enemy prevailing in strength.

The lack of fuel and ammunition forced them to leave everything in the swamps and render them unusable for the enemy.

Now, with a handful of people, I have occupied and defended the city of Pinsk so far without pressure from the enemy, it is difficult to say what will come of this.

Today I received an order to subordinate me to the 21st Army. So far I have not seen or spoken to anyone, but I am waiting for representatives. The mood is upbeat and cheerful. I'm currently in the process of tidying up some parts. During these battles, 50-60% of the workers remained at the headquarters, and the rest were killed.

I wish you complete success in your work. Your representative was informed in detail.

Commander greetings.

Major General Nedvigin.

R.5. Please say hello to Mr. Shlykov, Sandalov, Raikov and Dmitriev.

I think that any comments about this document are superfluous.

Get up, great country!

The Great Patriotic War began suddenly for the Soviet people. For the Soviet government and personally for I. V. Stalin, it was the result of a sophisticated diplomatic game that was waged between the USSR and Germany in recent years. After June 22, it was time for I. V. Stalin to reap the fruits of this game and carry out specific measures in the name of victory. First of all, it was necessary to raise the whole country and its people to fight the enemy. Calls were made throughout the country:

Get up, great country! Get up for a fight to the death!

With dark fascist power! With the damned horde!..

But these are just calls. They had to be backed up with concrete deeds. JV Stalin understood this well. Leafing through the chronicle of the first week of the Great Patriotic War:

June 23 (2nd day of the war)

Slovakia declared war on the USSR, and Hungary severed diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. German aviation made the first night raid on Leningrad, but neither

one plane failed to break through to the city. Soviet troops left Grodno and retreated 15 kilometers to the east. German troops occupied Grodno and Belovezh.

To manage all the combat activities of the Armed Forces of the USSR, the Headquarters of the High Command was created, which included People's Commissar of Defense Marshal of the Soviet Union S.K. Timoshenko (chairman), Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR Marshal of the Soviet Union K.E. Commissars of the USSR V. M. Molotov, Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR I. V. Stalin, Chief of the General Staff General of the Army G. K. Zhukov, First Deputy People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Marshal of the Soviet Union S. M. Budyonny , People's Commissar of the Navy Admiral N. G. Kuznetsov.

In the newspaper Pravda, next to a large portrait of I. V. Stalin, a statement by the Soviet government was published, which V. M. Molotov read on the radio at 12 o'clock on June 22.

June 24 (3rd day of the war)

Soviet troops began to withdraw. By the middle of the day, German troops occupied Vilnius, Kaunas. On the front of Army Group Center, the encirclement around the area east of Bialystok had already narrowed significantly in the Minsk area. On the Lvov direction, German

troops approached Mostiska, a gap of 50 kilometers formed at the junction between the 5th and 6th armies.

J. Goebbels wrote in his diary that day: "Military operations are developing remarkably in the east, beyond all expectations. Our new weapons are devastating. Russians crawl out of the bunkers tremblingly, and it is impossible to interrogate them all day long. We are advancing on two major fronts. So far, 1,800 Russian aircraft have been destroyed. They drop like flies. Their fighters have less speed than our Yu-88s. Everything goes

By plan and even beyond it.

At the same time, the first major political successes of the Soviet Union are indicated. The US President and the British Parliament declared that they would support the USSR. The Turkish ambassador to the USSR announced that his government had declared neutrality in the war between Germany and the USSR. Sweden decided to take a non-interference policy, but gave permission for the German division to pass through its territory from Norway to Finland.

By order of I. V. Stalin, by a decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, an Evacuation Council under the Council of People's Commissars was created under the chairmanship of the First Secretary of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions N. M. Shvernik. A decision is made when the enemy approaches to evacuate all the most valuable, and if it is impossible, to destroy it. The control of the evacuation, except for the Soviet authorities, is entrusted to the NKVD, which also receive an unspoken order to destroy prisoners in prisons, primarily on political grounds.

The search for those responsible for the defeat of the Red Army in the first days of the war begins. Deputy People's Commissar of Defense General of the Army K. A. Meretskov was arrested in the case of G. M. Stern and others, who the day before was appointed permanent adviser to the Headquarters of the High Command. The Hero of the Soviet Union, Lieutenant General of Aviation P. V. Rychagov, who was instructed in

June 1941 to conduct a secret inspection of the Soviet-German border, was arrested. All citizens are ordered to hand over award and hunting weapons and radios.

On this day, the song "Holy War" was played for the first time on Soviet radio.

June 25 (4th day of the war)

The offensive of the German troops continues successfully. At the same time, F. Halder reports to his leadership: "The assessment of the situation in the morning generally confirms the conclusion that the Russians

decided to wage decisive battles in the border zone and retreat only in certain sectors of the front, where they are forced to do so by the strong onslaught of our advancing troops".

On the central sector of the Western Front, the Goth tank group captured Voloshin and, thus, reached the heights in the Minsk region. On the front of Army Group South, Panzer Group Kleist occupied Dubno after a stubborn battle.

After a summit meeting, on the instructions of I.V. Stalin, the Headquarters of the High Command ordered the troops of the 3rd and 1st armies of the Western Front to be withdrawn to the Lida, Slonim, Pinsk line.

This was the first withdrawal order issued by Moscow and sanctioned by I. V. Stalin since the beginning of the war.

June 26 (fifth day of the war)

A. Hitler, together with the highest generals, moves from Berlin to East Prussia, where in the forest east of Rastenburg is the headquarters of the Fuhrer "Wolfschanze" ("Wolf's Lair"). There, the Fuhrer was informed that Army Group North, surrounding individual enemy groups, continued to systematically move north and at 14 hours after a stubborn battle took Dvinsk.

On the front of Army Group North, battles are being fought in the Vilnius region.

On the front of Army Group Center, the operation is developing successfully. In the Slonim area, enemy resistance was broken, and Slutsk was taken. Panzer Group Gotha, having in the first

line of three tank divisions, successfully advancing on Minsk. At a meeting with the Fuhrer All

come to the conclusion that "the problem of completing the complete encirclement of the enemy in the Bialystok region is beginning to be resolved."

Army Group "South" is also moving forward, although slowly, increasing the gap between the 5th and 6th armies in the Kiev direction. Panzer Group Kleist after stubborn battle occupied Dubno.

The foreign policy situation is also developing quite successfully for Germany. On this day, the Soviet air force raided Finnish military installations (ten ports and airfields), as a result of which Finland announced that

thinks

himself at war with the USSR. Soviet aviation also carried out raids on a number of Hungarian facilities in the border zone. The Hungarian government, not going for an official declaration of war on the USSR, decided to

respond with air raids on the territory of the Soviet Union. Croatia asked Germany to allow its military forces to take part in the war with Russia. Romanian troops launched a local attack on the territory of the USSR and build bridges across the northern arm of the Danube Delta.

I. V. Stalin, being unable to control all issues in parallel, ordered the head of the General Staff of the Red Army G. K. Zhukov to be recalled to Moscow from the headquarters of the South-Western Front. At the same time, according to his decision, K. E. Voroshilov and B. M. Shaposhnikov were sent to the Western Front.

To eliminate the threat of a deep breakthrough in the defense of the South-Western Front and the destruction of the main forces of the enemy's 1st Panzer Group, a counterattack by forces of four mechanized corps begins in the Dubno area. But, driven by G.K. Zhukov and M.P. Kirponos, the mechanized corps entered the battle after grueling 200-400-kilometer marches, during which they suffered significant losses from enemy air strikes and due to technical breakdowns of the materiel. Therefore, it is not surprising that the frontal counterattack in the Dubno region resulted in oncoming battles of four Soviet mechanized corps against the main forces of the 3rd and 48th motorized, 55th and 29th army corps of the enemy's 1st tank group. The counterattack of the Southwestern Front in the Dubno region, during which the best mechanized corps lost most of the tanks, did not achieve its goal.

Later, G.K. Zhukov wrote the following about these events:

"It is necessary to point out one more mistake made by the High Command and the General Staff... We are talking about a counter-offensive in accordance with Directive No. 03 of 22.6.41.

Setting the task of a counteroffensive, the Headquarters of the High Command did not know the real situation that had developed by the end of June 22. The command of the fronts did not know the situation either ... In the current situation, by the end of June 22, the only correct thing could be counterattacks by mechanized corps against the wedges of enemy armored groups. The counterattacks undertaken were for the most part poorly organized, and therefore did not reach the goal.

In view of the rapid advance of German troops deep into Soviet territory, I.V. Stalin ordered the formation of a new Reserve Front and deploy it on the Sushchevo line

—  
Nevel - Vitebsk - Mogilev - Zhlobin - Gomel - Chernigov - Desna River - Dnieper River. This

was an insurance measure. The front command, the Headquarters of the High Command, the General Staff in those days still did not have complete information about the enemy troops deployed against the western fronts, and the General Staff received clearly exaggerated information from the fronts about tanks, aircraft and motorized units of the enemy.

It was necessary, according to I.V. Stalin, "tighten the screws tighter." On this day, on his orders, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted a decree "On the working hours of workers and employees in wartime." Mandatory overtime work from 1 to 3 hours daily was introduced, regular and additional holidays were

canceled. Children under 16

Not

had to work overtime for more than 2 hours, women who were 6 months pregnant and breastfeeding were exempted from overtime work.

June 27 (sixth day of the war)

On this day, the Hungarian radio finally announced to all the people that Hungary was at war with the Soviet Union.

In the zone of Army Group North, German tanks approached Dvinsk, and infantry corps launched an attack on Riga.

On the front of the Army Group Center, the German offensive is being carried out in the Bialystok area, which by the end of the day was abandoned by the Soviet troops. 17th Panzer Division,

advancing on Minsk, went to the Stolbtsy area. On this day J. Goebbels in his wrote in

his diary: "Minsk is in our hands. The first big bag begins to tighten. It will contain many prisoners and various military equipment. The Russians are suffering colossal losses in tanks and planes, but they are still fighting well and, since Sunday, have learned a lot ... We are all afraid only that the Russians will retreat in time and avoid a battle of annihilation ... When captured, many shoot themselves out of fear, from the fact that they were inspired by the horror of our soldiers.

In the zone of Army Group South, the German command managed not only to repulse all the attacks of the Soviet troops on the southern flank of the Kleist tank group, but even to advance the right flank of the tank group in a southeast direction. By the end of the day, on the right flank of the Kleist Panzer Group, the 16th Panzer Division had reached Kremenets.

The Fuhrer was pleased with the news of the first major trophies. It was reported that a large amount of liquid fuel and gasoline, 42 210-mm mortars, 65 machine guns, 95 trucks, 215 tanks, 50 anti-tank guns, 18 artillery batteries were captured in Dubno.

The headquarters of the High Command still could not take the situation into their own hands and was forced only to give permission for the subsequent withdrawal of Soviet troops to the east. WITH

permission of I. V. Stalin at 12 o'clock in the afternoon, G. K. Zhukov sent a directive to the commander of the North-Western Front, which allowed the withdrawal of troops across the Western Dvina River in order to occupy a new line of defense on the front from Riga to Kraslava. The withdrawal had to be completed by the morning of June 30, 1941. To strengthen the defense, the 21st mechanized and 41st rifle corps were transferred to the North-Western Front.

A crisis situation is also being created in the zone of the Western Front by this day. Part of the forces of the front retreats across the Berezina River, the other part is pinned down by battles in the Minsk region. The German army groups "North" and "Center" united east of Minsk, surrounding the grouping of Soviet troops numbering about 300 thousand people.

The situation in the zone of the South-Western Front is still difficult. But G.K. Zhukov, who arrived in Moscow that morning, in his report to I.V. Stalin and S.K. Timoshenko, shields MP Kirponos in every possible way, reporting on the stubborn defense of his troops on unprepared lines. As a result of G.K. Zhukov's report, the Stavka made two important decisions. The first is to begin with the onset of darkness the withdrawal of the armies of the South-Western Front to the line of the rivers Stokhod, Styr, the cities of Kremenets, Zolochov, Strii,



Dolina, Vyshkov, and move the front control post from Ternopil to Novograd-Volynsky, and the air control post to Proskurov. The second is about the transfer of the 12th Army from the Southwestern Front to the newly formed Southern Front.

On this day, in agreement with I. V. Stalin, the commander of the Air Force of the 7th Army (former Deputy People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR - head of the Intelligence Directorate), Hero of the Soviet Union, Lieutenant General of Aviation I. I. Proskurov and the commander of the Air Force of the Southwestern Front, Hero Soviet Union Major General Aviation E. S. Ptukhin. Subsequently, both were shot.

By decision of I.V. Stalin, a strict dosage of information about the latest events on the fronts begins, which is brought to the population. The Soviet Information Bureau on that day reported:

"During the day, our troops in the Siauliai, Vilna and Baranovichi directions continued to retreat to prepared positions. On the Lutsk and Lvov directions, the day of June 27 passed in stubborn battles. All enemy attempts to break through were thwarted with heavy losses for him. A large number of prisoners and trophies were taken in the battles. In the Minsk direction, the offensive of large enemy tank units was repulsed. As a result of a counterattack by our troops in this direction, 40 tanks were destroyed, a large enemy headquarters was destroyed, a German general was killed, and operational documents were seized. On the entire sector of the front from Przemysl to the Black Sea, our troops firmly hold the state border.

June 28 (seventh day of the war)

On the front of Army Group North, the offensive of the German troops is developing successfully. Taken Libava.

In Tauroggen (Taurage) exceptionally large stocks of food were seized, including 60,000 tons of fat, very large stocks of meat, and live pigs. In Kaunas, large food warehouses and private processing enterprises of the food industry, which were guarded by Lithuanian self-defense units, fell into the hands of the German command in complete safety. All other sectors of the front are characterized by a small number of prisoners, along with a very large amount of captured property (including fuel).

On the front of Army Group Center, the inner ring of encirclement closed in the area east of Bialystok. At the same time, Hitler was informed that stubborn battles were going on in the Bialystok forest southeast of the city, which, contrary to expectations, fettered the entire center and part of the right wing of the 4th Army. Soviet troops are also trying to break through the outer ring of encirclement in the Novogrudok area. Minsk is

completely occupied by German troops. The right flank of Guderian's tank group is directly in front of Bobruisk.

At the front of Army Group South, Rovno was occupied in the middle of the day. Parts of the 17th Army are located directly in front of Lvov.

On this day, JV Stalin becomes aware of the abandonment of Minsk and Slonim. As a result of unsuccessful military operations in Belarus, 319 thousand captured Red Army soldiers and a large amount of weapons fell into the hands of the Germans. The enemy troops advancing from Grodno to the south and from the Belsk region to the northeast united in the Krynka region (on the Svisloch River).

JV Stalin decides to remove General D. G. Pavlov and his chief of staff from their positions. General A. I. Eremenko was appointed the new commander of the Western Front, and General G. K. Malandin was appointed chief of staff. A decision is also made and a directive signed by N.F. Vatutin on strengthening the troops of the

Western Front with four rifle and 23rd mechanized corps is sent.

JV Stalin ordered once again to remind the Soviet people of their duty to the Fatherland. The NKGB, the NKVD and the USSR Prosecutor's Office issued a joint order "On the procedure for bringing to justice traitors to the Motherland and members of their families." A soldier who was captured was considered a traitor - a person who deliberately committed a crime. The military and civilians who had even been behind the front line for a short time fell under suspicion.

The NKVD began mass arrests in those areas of the Baltic and Eastern Poland that were still controlled by Soviet troops and that the Germans were advancing on. "Enemies of the people" were shot in the yards of the Tallinn, Rivne and Lvov prisons. In the prison of the city of Tartu, 192 people were shot, and their bodies were thrown into a well. Prisoners were also killed during the evacuation of prisons in Minsk, Smolensk, Kiev, Kharkov, Zaporozhye, Dnepropetrovsk, Orel, Uman.

The Soviet Information Bureau did its best to soften the situation. On that day, the Soviet people heard from his lips:

"During June 28, our troops retreating to new positions fought with heavy losses for the enemy. In the Minsk direction, our troops continue to successfully fight enemy tanks, counteracting their advance to the east. About 300 German tanks were destroyed here. Tense battles are going on in the region of Lvov and in the Lutsk direction, during which our troops inflict significant defeat on the enemy. In the remaining sectors of the front, our troops firmly hold the state border.

June 29 (eighth day of the war)

At 04:20, after artillery preparation and a strike by 120 bombers in the Murmansk direction, the German mountain rifle corps "Norway" went on the offensive. From Hungary it was reported that the Carpathian corps would be able to launch an offensive on July 2. Italy provided information on the composition of its corps, intended for operations in Russia, numbering 40,000 people. From Madrid it was reported that Spain

intends to send to Russia one legion numbering 15,000.

In the zone of Army Group North, a hasty evacuation of Soviet organizations and enterprises towards Leningrad is carried out. On the left flank of Army Group North, the forward detachment of the 1st Army Corps broke into Riga, capturing railway bridges

in complete safety. German troops captured all available crossings on the Northern Dvina. The defenders of Liepaja left their last positions and retreated to the south.

On the front of Army Group Center, Guderian launched an offensive with two panzer divisions on Bobruisk, trying to capture the bridges across the Dnieper at Rogachev and Mogilev.

On the front of the Army Group "South" a battle unfolded in the area south of Dubno. Soviet troops began to withdraw in the Lvov area.

At the same time, F. Halder reported to the Fuhrer: "Information from the front confirms that the Russians are fighting everywhere to the last man. They surrender only in places, primarily where there is a large percentage of Mongolian peoples in the troops (in front of the front of the 6th and 9th armies). It is striking that when artillery batteries, etc., are captured, only a few are taken prisoner. Some of the Russians fight until they are killed, others flee, throwing off their uniforms and trying to get out of the encirclement under the guise of peasants ...".

On that day, in the Kremlin, as before, due to the lack of communications, they were completely unaware of the true state of affairs at the fronts. Unable to stand it, I. V. Stalin, together with members of the Politburo, arrived at the People's Commissariat of Defense and asked questions about where the command of the Western Front was located and when contact would be established with it.

G.K. Zhukov could not give exhaustive answers to these questions. Later, A. I. Mikoyan wrote that J. V. Stalin only then, apparently, understood the whole tragedy of the situation and the seriousness of the miscalculations of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff. It exploded:

"What kind of General Staff is this and its chief, who does not know who he is in command of! — G.K. Zhukov burst into tears and left. After 10 minutes, V. M. Molotov brought the calmed down chief of the General Staff back. It was decided to send representatives of the General Staff to the Western Front.

"Stalin was depressed and gloomy," wrote Mikoyan. - When we left the people's commissariat, he said: "Lenin left us a great legacy, we, his heirs, pissed it all off." After that, I. V. Stalin left for the Middle Dacha, and communication with him was interrupted.

Nikolai Nikolaevich Voronov, at that time the head of the Main Directorate of Air Defense of the country, deputy people's commissar of defense, narrating about the last days of June 1941, notes that "Stalin was depressed, nervous and unbalanced ... In my opinion, he incorrectly imagined the scale of the outbreak war, those forces and means that could really stop the advancing enemy on the broadest front from sea to sea ... At that time, the Headquarters received many reports from

fronts with clearly inflated data on enemy losses. Maybe this introduced

Stalin astray."

The writer I.F. Stadnyuk writes:

"Without waiting for the next report by People's Commissar of Defense Timoshenko and Chief of the General Staff Zhukov about the operational situation, Stalin, with a number of members of the Politburo, suddenly appeared at the People's Commissariat of Defense.

This was the most dangerous moment in the relationship between state power and the high command of the Armed Forces of the USSR, there was a line that could be followed by an explosion with the most serious consequences. I questioned Molotov in detail about how

All  
happened...

The quarrel ended with Zhukov and Timoshenko suggesting that Stalin and the Politburo members leave the office and not interfere with them studying the situation and making decisions.

On the way to the courtyard of the People's Commissariat of Defense, where the cars were waiting, Beria whispered something excitedly to Stalin. Molotov thought he was intimidating Stalin

threatened by a military coup at night. This conjecture was especially intensified when Molotov saw that Beria's car sped off towards the Lubyanka, and Stalin, without saying goodbye to anyone, went to his Kuntsevskaya dacha.

Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, at that time the first secretary of the Central Committee of the CP (b) of Ukraine, a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee, wrote: "I often recall Beria's story about Stalin's behavior from the beginning of the war. At first, he did not want to believe it and clung to the hope that this was

a provocation, ordered not to even open fire, hoped for a miracle, tried to hide behind his own illusions. Then they

began to report to him about the victorious advance of the Nazi troops. It was then that what he hid from everyone was openly revealed - his panic fear of Hitler. Stalin looked old, beaten down, confused. To the members of the Politburo, who had gathered on the evening of June 30 (June 29. - Avi.) in his office, he said: "Everything that

Lenin achieved and what he left us, we irretrievably lost. Everything is dead." AND,

nothing is

adding, left the office, went to his dacha.

Beria said that everyone was left at a loss. But then we decided to outline some practical measures. After all, there was a war, it was necessary to act. After discussing the matter, they decided to go to Stalin themselves. Stalin accepted them, and they began to convince him that not everything was lost, that we have a big country, we can

gather strength and repulse the enemy, urged him to return to leadership and lead the country's defense. Stalin agreed, returned to the Kremlin and set to work again.

Nevertheless, it is on this day that the directive of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks to the party and Soviet organizations of the front-line regions "Everything for the front, everything for victory" is adopted. It also preaches a merciless fight against alarmists and rumor spreaders. For failure to comply with the orders of the military authorities, a fine of up to 3,000 rubles or imprisonment for up to 6 months is provided, for the spread of false rumors that "arouse alarm among the population" - a prison sentence of two to five years.

On this day, at the request of the Headquarters of the High Command, the General Staff sends a directive to the Military Councils of the Leningrad Military District and the North-Western Front on the preparation of a defense line along the Pskov, Ostrov, Opochka, Sebezh line based on the Pskov-Ostrovsky fortified area, strengthening it with field fortifications. Completion date - no later than July 2, 1941. At the same time, it was necessary to "organize the work so that the frontier had constant combat readiness."

The evacuation of part of the population, primarily the disabled, from Leningrad begins. Workers and employees of all enterprises and major organizations of the city remain in place.

From the Soviet Information Bureau:

"On June 29, the Nazi-German troops went on the offensive along the entire front from the Barents Sea to the Gulf of Finland. Repeated attacks by enemy troops were repulsed, and he withdrew to his fortifications.

In the Vilna-Dvina direction, energetic attacks

Our troops suffered significant damage to enemy units. The offensive of the enemy's motorized units that had broken through was stopped in the Minsk direction ... Hitler and his generals report on the radio that during the 7 days of the war they captured or destroyed more than 2 thousand Soviet tanks, 600 guns, destroyed more than 4 thousand aircraft and captured more than 40 thousand Red Army soldiers, while they themselves lost no more than

150 aircraft. We even

awkward

refute this boastful nonsense. Barbarically attacking our border posts, which had neither tanks nor artillery, the Germans in the first days fought against the border guards. Only on the third, and in some places on the fourth day, the regular units of our army managed to come into contact with the enemy. It was precisely because of this that the Germans managed to occupy Bialystok, Grodno, Brest, Vilna, Kaunas. But the Red Army managed to turn

around and thwart German plans for the lightning capture of Kyiv and Smolensk ... "

June 30 (ninth day of the war)

The infantry corps of Army Group North continue their energetic offensive towards the Western Dvina, defeating Soviet formations and units located west of this river. Fierce fighting unfolded in the Riga region.

In the zone of Army Group Center, part of the encircled grouping of Soviet troops broke through between Minsk and Slonim through the front of Guderian's tank group.

On the front of the Army Group "South", despite some local difficulties, the battles are developing successfully. Busy Lviv.

The tense situation in the Dubno region was discharged in favor of the German troops.

J. Goebbels wrote in his diary that day: "We are now working with three secret transmitters for Russia. Trends: The first transmitter is Trotskyist, the second is separatist, and the third is nationalist Russian. Everyone is sharply directed against the Stalinist regime."

In Moscow, on this day, a decision is made to form the State Defense Committee (GKO), headed by I.V. Stalin. It also included: V.M. Molotov (Deputy Chairman), K.E. Voroshilov, G.M. Malenkov, L.P. Beria.

A.I. recalled how this supreme body of state power was created. Mikoyan:

"The idea of creating a State Defense Committee following the example of the Council of Labor and Defense during the Civil War belonged to L.P. Beria. In the afternoon, Molotov, Beria, Voroshilov and I, having discussed the details and the composition of the Committee, went to the Near Dacha to see Stalin. When he saw us

literally petrified. The head went to the shoulders, in the widened eyes, a clear fright. (Stalin, of course, decided that we had come to arrest him.) He looks at us inquiringly and muffles out of himself: "Why did you come?" The question asked was very strange. After all, in fact, he himself had to convene us.

Molotov stepped forward and, on behalf of all of us, said that it was necessary to concentrate power so that everything would be decided quickly, in order to put the country on its feet. Talking about an offer

create GKO. Stalin is literally changing before our eyes. The former fear - did not happen, shoulders straightened out..."

Judging by the memoirs of contemporaries, in a number of cases, somewhat embellished in their assessment of events, I.V. Stalin really was. Most likely, the state of a person came, for whom the process of falling from the Olympus of that

greatness and infallibility, created both by Stalin himself and by his entourage.

The first steps, which indicated that Stalin was trying to take control not only of himself, but also of control over the situation, were personnel replacements. General A.I. was initially appointed commander of the troops of the Western Front. Eremenko, then Marshal of the Soviet Union S.K. Timoshenko. General P.P. became the commander of the North-Western Front. Sobennikov. At the same time, General G.K. was sent as chief of staff to the Western Front. Malandin, to the North-West - General N.F. Vatutin. The head of the Main Directorate of Political Affairs is appointed a member of the Military Council of the Western Front.

Propaganda of the Red Army, Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, People's Commissar of State Control, member

Central Committee and Organizing Bureau of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks Lev Zakharovich Mekhlis.

I.F. Stadnyuk writes about this: "The night of June 30 passed quietly, although, as Molotov not very confidently stated, Beria raised his troops on alert. I did not find documentary evidence for the latter.

G.K. Zhukov, despite J.V. Stalin's dissatisfaction with the work of the General Staff, remained in the same place. Neither Georgy Konstantinovich himself, nor A. M. Vasilevsky in his

memories of these days are not written. By all appearances, it was impossible to remember anything good. As the scale of the military catastrophe became apparent, the fate of many top military leaders literally hung in the balance. In the highest echelons of power, the perpetrators were traditionally searched for.

Stalin returned to the Kremlin in the early morning of June 30 with the decision made: to concentrate all power in the country in the hands of the State Defense Committee, headed by Stalin himself. On the same day, the "trinity" in the People's Commissariat of Defense was disconnected: Timoshenko was sent to the Western Front as commander on the same day, Lieutenant General Vatutin, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, was appointed Chief of Staff of the North-Western Front. Zhukov remained in his post as chief of the General Staff under the vigilant eye of Beria.

In reality, G.K. Zhukov was saved by the fact that at that time the deployment of new military formations began according to the plan of the General Staff. On this day, the General Staff sent a directive to the commander of the troops of the Leningrad Military District on the formation of four army reserve rifle regiments in Staraya Russa to build up the efforts of Soviet troops in the Leningrad direction.

The situation in the zone of the North-Western Front was completely incomprehensible. Poorly controlled formations of the 11th Army fought their way in the direction of Polotsk. By this time, the army had lost up to 75% of its military equipment and approximately 60% of its personnel. There was no contact with her. Her whereabouts became known only by the evening of June 30.

G.K. Zhukov late in the evening telephoned the commander of the North-Western Front F.I. Kuznetsov, who continued to lead the troops until July 4: "In the area of \u200b\u200bst. Dovgilishki, Koltynyany, forests west of Sventsyany found the 11th Army of the North-Western

front, departing from the Kaunas region. The army does not have fuel, shells, food forage. The army does not know the situation and what to do. The Headquarters of the High Command ordered, under your personal responsibility, to immediately organize the withdrawal of this army from the Svetsiyan region to the region north of the Desna.

Thus ended the stormy June 1941.

Germany, having started a war with the Soviet Union, ensured that a number of states of Western and Central Europe came out on its side. German troops in battles with the Red Army won a number of victories and captured a significant territory, prisoners and material supplies. A large number of Soviet aviation and a significant part of the mechanized troops were destroyed. The first line of fortified regions, built along the new state border of the USSR, played practically no role in the defense of the country. In all important areas, German troops entered the operational space.

At the same time, the shock gradually passed in Moscow after the first days of the war and the first defeats of the Red Army. The Soviet Union was gradually moving into a wartime mode of operation. A number of government decrees were adopted, the State Defense Committee, the Headquarters of the High Command were created. Mass mobilization into the Red Army was launched, and an additional 5.5 million people were put under arms. The total strength of the USSR Armed Forces was increased to 9.6 million

Human.

Of course, one cannot say that in all this the merit is exclusively of I.V. Stalin. Thousands of people worked alongside him and in many key positions, striving to  
How

can better do the job assigned to them. As a result, the flywheel of a huge state gradually began to unwind, aimed at turning the country into a single military camp.

At the same time, great shortcomings in the Soviet military art were also discovered. The troops were not ready to go over to the defensive on unprepared lines, to carry out a consistent withdrawal from one line to another, to organize and conduct counterattacks and counterattacks.

Already the first operations of the armies and fronts covering the state border showed the low professional training of individual military leaders, insufficient combat and psychological training of the troops. There were cases of mass exodus from the battlefield, desertion from their units and subunits. Especially the latter was often sinned by military personnel called up from among the inhabitants of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus.

The collapse of the blitzkrieg

At the beginning of July 1941, A. Hitler had no doubts about the implementation of the Barbarossa plan by the German command. Reports constantly coming from the General Staff of the Ground Forces, from the main headquarters of all types of armed forces, directly from the front, were literally full of victorious reports. Every day, German troops, having pressed or even defeated the formations and units of the enemy, occupied new Soviet cities, captured a large number of prisoners and various trophies. Numerous allies joined the offensive of the German troops: Finland,

Romania, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, Spain. The crusade to the east under the German flag was gaining momentum.

But historians note that from the beginning of July 1941, a surge of strong-willed energy began to manifest itself in I.V. Stalin, who began to actively invade various spheres of life

state and combat activities of the Red Army. The struggle between the Soviet Union and Germany, between I. V. Stalin and A. Hitler began to take on tough and uncompromising forms. And at a time when the German leadership,

intoxicated with success, sometimes allowed itself to relax, the spring of the Soviet state mechanism was just beginning to twist.

A lot has been written about the military events of the summer and autumn of 1941. Let's try

put them on temporary shelves, linking them with the direct activities of A. Hitler

And

I.V. Stalin.

July 1

German troops occupied Riga. On the southern wing of the Soviet-German front, German, Romanian and Hungarian troops went on the offensive from the territory of Hungary and Romania in the general direction of Mogilev-Podolsk - Zhmerinka.

At the meeting held by Stalin, the "Mobilization National Economic Plan for the Third Quarter of 1941" was considered and approved. At the same time, decisions were made

"On the expansion of the rights of people's commissars of the USSR in wartime conditions", "On the organization of the production of T-34 medium tanks at the Krasnoye Sormovo plant", a meeting was held with leading designers of aviation equipment, the tasks of creating an underground and partisan movement in Ukraine, Belarus, in Karelia and the Oryol region, a number of personnel issues were resolved, a report was heard from the head of the Main Directorate of Air Defense, and the question of attitude towards the Polish government in exile was discussed.

JV Stalin sends a telegram to the commander of the Southern Front, I. Tyulenev, with an order to hold Bessarabia, which is planned to be used as a springboard for organizing an offensive against the enemy.

July 2

The State Defense Committee adopted a resolution "On the general mandatory preparation of the population for air defense", discussed the formation of divisions of the people's militia in Moscow, the creation of a special group under the People's Commissariat of Defense to form new formations, the most important tasks of the Soviet Bureau of Military-Political Propaganda, considered draft decisions on the creation of the Marine Defense Department of the city of Leningrad, the strengthening of the Moscow air defense zone, a draft decree "On responsibility for the dissemination of false rumors in wartime" was discussed.



3 July

I.V. Stalin made a speech on the radio in which he outlined a program to mobilize all the forces and means of the country to repulse the enemy. "It is necessary that our people, the Soviet people, understand the full depth of the danger that threatens our country, and renounce complacency, carelessness," stressed I.V. Stalin. "The enemy is cruel and implacable... It is further necessary that there be no place in our ranks for whiners and cowards, alarmists and deserters, so that our people do not know fear in the struggle, selflessly go to our patriotic war of liberation against the fascist enslavers... We must immediately reorganize all our work on a military footing, subordinating everything to the interests of the front and the tasks of organizing the defeat of the enemy.

On the same day, the State Defense Committee adopted a resolution on the evacuation of about 30 factories of the People's Commissariat of Arms from the central regions of the country and Leningrad to the cities of the Volga region, the Urals, Siberia and Central Asia, and considered the appointment of directors of a number of defense enterprises.

At a meeting of the Politburo, the task of the Soviet military delegation in negotiations with the British military mission was discussed, the composition of the delegation, as well as the military mission to England, was approved. The draft resolution "On the creation of backup plants for the production of tank diesel engines" was considered, as well as letters from the executive committee of the Communist International to the Communist Parties of the countries occupied by the Nazis.

4th of July

From the diary of J. Goebbels: "Favorable development of martial law. The Hungarians are advancing through the Carpathians. Busy Tiraspol. The oil region (Western Ukraine. - Auth.) fell into our hands almost intact ... The Dnieper was forced in the Rogachev area.

Nikolai Alekseevich Voznesensky, First Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, reported to Stalin the draft decision of the State Defense Committee "On the development of a military-economic plan for ensuring the country's defense." Then, information was heard from the chairman of the Council for the Evacuation Nikolai Mikhailovich Shvernik, a decree was signed on measures to strengthen political control of postal and telegraph correspondence, on the appointment of members of the Military Council of the North-Western Front F.E. Bokov and T.F. Shtykov. Having taken the military

after hearing information about the state of affairs on the fronts, Joseph Vissarionovich again returned to

party and state affairs, signing the proposal of G.M. Malenkov on the appointment of party organizers of the Central Committee at 1170 large military factories and heavy industry enterprises, after hearing the Chairman of the State Planning Commission Maxim Zakharovich Saburov and Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars Vyacheslav

Alexandrovich Malyshev. Later, the reports of the People's Commissar of Railways I.V. Kovalev, Chairman of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court V.V. Ulrich, a conversation took place with the secretary of the Leningrad

regional committee and the city party committee, a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee Andrei

Alexandrovich Zhdanov.

At night, having familiarized himself with the next operational summary of the General Staff, Stalin

ordered to send a telegram to the troops with the following content: "In the battles for the socialist Fatherland ... a number of officers and rank and file showed exceptional courage and courage. Urgently make a presentation for the award ... on

1. The working day of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief ended with the signing of resolutions on the voluntary mobilization of the workers of Moscow and the Moscow Region in the People's Militia Division and on the establishment of the Commission for the Geological and Geographical Support of the Red Army.

July 10

The advance of the German troops continues. The troops of the Army Group "North" captured Pskov. The defeat of the Soviet troops in the Bialystok-Minsk region was completed. According to a report to Hitler by the commander of Army

Group Center F. von Bock, the Soviet troops lost 287.7 thousand people as prisoners alone. Captured or destroyed 2585 tanks, 1449 guns, 246 aircraft. German troops approached Smolensk. The troops of the Army Group "South"

captured Zhytomyr and reached the Kyiv defensive area.

After the encirclement of the Bialystok and Lvov ledges, up to 200 large warehouses with weapons, ammunition, fuel, food and other military equipment fell into the hands of the German command.

By that time, the GKO had made a number of important decisions. On the initiative of I. V. Stalin, a decree was approved on the organization of the High Commands of the troops of strategic directions: North-Western, Western and South-Western. Marshals K.E. were appointed commanders-in-chief. Voroshilov, S.K. Timoshenko, S.M. Budyonny, members of the Military Councils A.A. Zhdanov, N.A. Bulganin (deputy chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, member of the Central Committee) and N.S. Khrushchev, chiefs of staff, Generals M.V. Zakharov, G.K.

Malandin, A.P. Pokrovsky. General G.K. Malandin was soon replaced by Marshal B.M. Shaposhnikov.

Unfortunately, the commanders-in-chief and their small apparatus were immediately placed in a position almost without rights. Most often, they were used to implement not their own plans, but the directives of the Headquarters, which continued to lead the fronts through their heads. The main commands could not, in essence, dispose of the reserves that were in their zone, make this or that decision without agreement with the Headquarters. Often the impression was that they played the role of a kind of "scapegoat". With such a rigid centralization of planning and operations, these regional bodies of strategic leadership have not been able to fully express themselves.

First week of August

The situation on the fronts remained difficult. Practically blockaded Leningrad. Unsuccessfully for the Soviet troops, battles are unfolding in the Smolensk region. The enemy begins an attack on Moscow. On July 19, Yelnya was abandoned. The encirclement and destruction of a large grouping of troops of the Southwestern Front in the Uman region (103,000 prisoners) has been completed.

At the same time, A. Hitler rationally looks at the developing events and on July 28 declares that for Germany the industrial region around Kharkov is more important than Moscow. The offensive of the German troops in the Donbass begins.

J. Goebbels wrote in his diary on July 30: "The Bolsheviks operate on the entire front under good leadership and, above all, in defense, they quickly apply German combat tactics. The amazingly dexterous activity of Soviet aviation, which, under the strong protection of fighters, is increasingly intervening in battles on the ground ... The crisis is not

Maybe

1 TsAMO, 4.3, op.11556, d.7, l.149.

out of the question, but still things are going slower than our optimists expected.

On July 19, I. V. Stalin also assumed the functions of People's Commissar of Defense, relieving Marshal of the Soviet Union S. K. Timoshenko from this post. From now on, in addition to this, he concentrated in himself the positions of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, Chairman of the State Defense Committee. On July 29, G.K. Zhukov was dismissed from the post of Chief of the General Staff, and instead of him,

B.M. was again appointed to this position. Shaposhnikov.

With tension, he solved the tasks of the rear. The troops suffered heavy losses, requiring more and more reserves. All this forced the Supreme Commander to work 16-18 hours a day. Iosif Vissarionovich haggard, became even more rigid, intolerant, often angry. Very often, after reports of another failure at the front, he began to dictate not operational, but "punitive" orders. In particular, the requirements for the families of servicemen who were captured were tightened. According to the report of the state security organs, the arrest of a large group of commanders was authorized. During the first ten days of August, there was a change of two commanders of the troops of the fronts, nine commanders of the armies.

8 August

The day before, I. V. Stalin, retaining all previous posts, was appointed Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the USSR. From now on, absolute power in the party, the country and the army is concentrated in his hands.

August 9

Stalin, as usual, only in the morning forgot an uneasy sleep that lasted no more than four hours. He woke up several times. Having risen and drank tea, Iosif Vissarionovich did not go to the Kremlin, but ordered B. M. Shaposhnikov through Poskrebyshchev to come to him by 12 o'clock and report on the situation on the fronts.

At a quarter to 12 the Chief of the General Staff was at the dacha. He approached the map laid out on the table and quietly, carefully choosing his words, began to report.

That

was the first report to Stalin as the Supreme Commander. The report is formidable and unpleasant to read. The fighting took place on the distant approaches to Leningrad, in

near Smolensk, in the Kiev defense center. The stability of the defense was still low. The enemy had the strategic initiative. The matter was aggravated by the absence of second echelons and large reserves on a number of sectors of the front. Of more how

Only 90 of the 200 divisions of the active army were 80 percent complete, the rest of the formations numbered no more than 3,000 personnel.

- The battle of Smolensk, - continued Boris Mikhailovich, - made it possible to stop the German troops in the most dangerous, western, direction. True, our attempt to carry out a counter-offensive here gave only a partial result, breaking the enemy's blow. As before, there is an acute shortage of troops, as a result of which divisions more often form battle formations in one echelon. The situation near Kyiv became more complicated. As of this morning, we can say that the 6th and 12th armies of the Southwestern Front have been cut off," the marshal specified bitterly.

- Can we talk now with the leadership of the South-Western Front? Stalin interrupted the Chief of the General Staff, recalling yesterday's conversation with Vasilevsky, Chief of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff.

"If Kirponos and Khrushchev are not in the army, then we will contact them," came the answer.

A few minutes later, "Bodo" tapped out: "Colonel-General Kirponos is at the apparatus."

Stalin: Information has come down to us that the front has decided with a light heart to hand over Kyiv to the enemy, allegedly due to the lack of units capable of defending the city. Is this true?

Kirponos: Hello, Comrade Stalin. You have been reported incorrectly. I and the Military Council of the front are taking all measures to ensure that Kyiv is not to surrender in any case ...

Stalin: Very well. I firmly press your hand. I wish you success."

Having calmed down a little, having given the necessary instructions to Marshal Shaposhnikov, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief arrived at the Kremlin an hour later. Here he was waiting for another trouble, now a personal plan. He received a message about his eldest son Jacob. Sources cover this fact in different ways.

"Stalin entered the office," writes I.F. Stadnyuk in the trilogy "War", intending to immediately order the head of security to carry away the "Telefunken". The boss, a full-bodied general in a field uniform without insignia, as if guessing

Stalin's desire, looked expectantly at him through the open door from the hallway, frozen at attention at the table with telephones. But something made Stalin hesitate. Approaching the radio, he looked at it like a living creature with a hostile look and pressed a key with his finger. A green cat's eye lit up and blinked on the panel, and from behind the yellow drapery that hid the membranes, a growing crackle escaped, and Russian speech began to break through it: a male voice in a pompous tenor transmitted an overview of events from Berlin

on  
Eastern Front...

Yes, today the working day for Stalin began hard. The roll of heart-wounding memories gave way to bad news: the German announcer, having finished describing the situation in Army Group North, suddenly, raising his voice, said:

- From the headquarters of Field Marshal Kluge, a report was received that on July 16 near Liozno, southeast of Vitebsk, German soldiers of the motorized corps of General Schmidt captured the son of the Kremlin dictator Stalin - Senior Lieutenant Yakov Dzhugashvili, commander of an artillery battery from the 7th rifle corps of General Vinogradov. Having been identified, Yakov Dzhugashvili was taken by plane to the headquarters of Field Marshal Kluge on the evening of July 18. An important prisoner is now being interrogated...

Everything seemed to freeze inside Stalin. He pressed the switch, the receiver clicked like it had fired. Not in vain, then, he remembered Jacob. The worst fears that disturbed him in a dream came true ...

Stalin looked up from his papers, the writer continues. - He got up from his chair and seemed to just now see Molotov and Kalinin at the long table, although when they entered, he returned their greetings and invited them to sit down with a look.

Poskrebyshchev entered inaudibly, turned on the electricity, which caused the oak wall panels of the office to immediately part, and announced the arrival of Mekhlis. In response, Stalin

beckoningly waved to Poskrebyshchev with his hand, in which he held the extinguished pipe, then turned

To

Molotov and Kalinin:

- I think we will wait for B. M. Shaposhnikov, listen to his report and new proposals of the General Staff, and then we will begin to solve our current affairs.

At the last words of Stalin, Mekhlis appeared at the door of the office - slender, in the form of an army commissar, smart, but unusually gloomy and even pale.

After saying hello and not very well clicking the heels of his polished, gleaming chrome boots, he approached Stalin and, looking at him with some painfully apprehensive

look, said:

- Comrade Stalin, I am obliged to inform you of a political report from the Western Front that is very unpleasant for all of us ...

Mekhlis's last words were drowned out by a new lightning bolt. A lingering rumble of thunder burst into the office, as if opening the heavenly shutters wider, and the downpour whipping outside the windows turned into a gray boiling wall. Stalin went to the window and, putting his face under the swirling cloud of water dust, calmly said:

- Sit down, comrade Mekhlis...

But Mekhlis did not sit down. Looking tensely at Stalin's back, he struggled to find the right words:

- Comrade Stalin, a very unpleasant ... heavy report.

"Report," Stalin ordered without turning around.

And Mekhlis reported:

- The head of the political department of the Western Front reports that, in all likelihood, your son, Yakov Iosifovich, was captured by the Germans ...

Stalin continued to look at the downpour, and from the side it seemed that he did not hear

words of the head of Glavpur.

"The political administration has no exact confirmation," Mekhlis continued painfully, as if suffering from the fact that Stalin did not want to turn his face to him, "but it is being done  
All  
possible...

Even now, Stalin did not move, because he knew in advance what Mekhlis had come to him with. Molotov and Kalinin, stunned by the bad news, looked sympathetically and with pain at Stalin, who turned away to the window, unable to understand whether he heard the words of the army commissar in the noise of the downpour or not. And Mekhlis, looking at them in confusion, spoke

again:

- A special department of the front and a specially created group of political leaders are taking all measures to either find out the truth or, if Yakov Iosifovich is not with the Germans, to find him, dead or alive ...

Stalin continued to be silent, as if unable to tear himself away from the spectacle of a raging thunderstorm.

"Koba, don't you hear?! Molotov asked excitedly, raising his voice. - The Germans captured Yasha! ..

Stalin slowly, as if his body did not obey him well, turned away from the window and looked at Molotov with a gloomy and somehow haunted look. Then he slowly went to his desk, sat down in an armchair and calmly, with hidden reproach, said:

- Stalin is not deaf ... I already know about the capture of Senior Lieutenant Yakov Dzhugashvili ...

- I undertake to find out everything to the end! .. - Mehlis broke the silence. - Moreover, it is possible to arrange Jacob's escape: to mobilize our scouts. I have already talked with General Dronov... Finally, if this fails, we can bargain with Hitler!

- Bargain with Hitler? - Stalin asked in a changed voice and looked at Mekhlis so that he was confused.

"I mean the exchange," Mekhlis began to explain confusedly. - We have several captured generals ... We can give them to Hitler in exchange for Yakov.

- Well, well ... The head of the Main Political Directorate, the army commissar of the first rank, offers the General Secretary a trade deal with Hitler! - Stalin, leaving the table, began to walk around the office, now and then looking at Mekhlis with caustic irony. - The army is fighting, people are dying, and the Mehlis is bargaining ...

"Koba, in my opinion, you are going too far," Molotov supported Mekhlis, turning to Stalin. - After all, there really is an international practice of exchanging prisoners between the warring parties.

"Quite right," Kalinin also said his word. - And nothing reprehensible here  
No.

Okay, defenders! - Stalin, stopping in the middle of the office, was already smiling peacefully. - I imagined myself bargaining with Hitler... Unthinkable! - He again walked along the carpet and after a short silence spoke as if to himself: -

Of course, it would be nice to save Yashcha ... It will be harder for him in captivity than anyone else ... They will try to play seriously with Stalin's son ...

But what will those many, many thousands of our fighters and commanders whom we do not steal and not exchange? ... - He

again

he stopped in the middle of the office and, already screaming with pain and hopelessness, looked in turn into the faces of Molotov, Kalinin, Mekhlis. But he immediately spoke in a softened voice: "We are the leaders of the party and the state!" And we have no right to inspire anyone with the idea of the advantage of captivity over death ... Maybe this is cruel, but

so the logic of the struggle requires ...

We believed and will continue to believe that surrender is not only a manifestation of cowardice, but also a betrayal ... It's another matter if people are captured by chance, not of their own free will, captured unconscious ... I believe that and Jacob did not surrender himself ...

I believe! - Then Stalin went up to Mekhlis, who still continued to stand at the long table. Poking an extinct pipe into the sparkling button of the tunic of the army commissar of the first rank, he tenaciously looked into his eyes, as if into his very soul. Lowering his voice, he said with heartfelt satisfaction:

"And your idea, Comrade Mekhlis, about the exchange of German generals deserves attention..." Then he turned to Molotov, waved his hand in his direction and specified: "That's your part, Comrade People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs." .. Only, apparently, we need to wait a little with this until we get into

more

officers captured ...

... Let Hitler give us one person for all his generals - Ernst Thalmann!

Everyone, shocked, was silent, reflecting on what they had heard.

A slightly different version is presented by the writer V.D. Uspensky through the mouth of his hero Lukashev.

"On August 9, from Leningrad," he says, "a special plane delivered a secret package from a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, a member of the Military Council of the North-Western Direction A.A. Zhdanov. The

accompanying

note said very briefly:

Here

German leaflet distributed by enemy propagandists... No comment.

And frankly speaking, the leaflet was impressive. One side was still so-and-so, quite ordinary for that time ... Its second side had the character of an important political action aimed at undermining the authority of the Soviet command, at self-justification of insecure, cowardly people ... However,

judge for yourself.

Clear photo. Three people are walking across the lawn. One German officer, who put his hands in the pockets of his open overcoat, can not be counted, he is here on the side of the burn. Then a very attractive, middle-aged German in a tunic and breeches, with excellent bearing, without a cap:

a fair face and completely white (or gray) hair. shoulder to shoulder with

him

dark-haired, dark-faced, in some kind of dark canopy (maybe a wide tunic

without a belt) and also without a headdress - Yakov Dzhugashvili. He gesticulates, explaining something to the German. Everyone has a businesslike, calm expression on their faces: friends on a walk, and nothing more. It was this that struck me and immediately caused an outburst of anger in Iosif Vissarionovich.

- The shame is indelible!

"Maybe he was taken prisoner, wounded, unconscious," I suggested.

He had no right to be captured under any circumstances. He could have committed suicide there, with the Germans, and not walk around with German officers! A shame! He

always thought only of himself and never of me, of the honor of our family. It doesn't exist for me anymore! - cut off Joseph Vissarionovich.

... It was necessary to deal with Yakov somehow, to make some decision. And since the matter concerned, first of all, personally Stalin, his family, the discussion took place not in the office of Joseph Vissarionovich, but at the Kuntsevskaya dacha, at a late dinner and after it. Present: Shaposhnikov, Molotov, Beria and the author of these lines. Stalin immediately puzzled Lavrenty Pavlovich with a direct and harsh question: is it possible to establish where Yakov is, steal him or carry out an operation, after which it will be officially announced that Senior Lieutenant Dzhugashvili did not submit to the enemy and died at the hands of Nazi executioners. Molotov supported: sadly, it is necessary to take all measures, even the most extreme ones.

Beria, without his usual self-confidence, began to talk at length about the fact that the Germans, of course, would guard Yakov especially carefully, transferring him from one place to another.

other. But we, they say, will try to find out where he is ...

Boris Mikhailovich Shaposhnikov gently, but quite weightily, expressed his opinion,

reduced to this ... We will not be able to find and neutralize Yakov Dzhugashvili now. You don't even need to start any actions, you don't need to show interest in the prisoner. This will only raise his authority in the eyes of the enemy.

"But we must respond to German propaganda, we must oppose something to the enemy!" Stalin said.

No response is the best answer. They make noise and stop. No official confirmation or denial. Someone among us will believe the Germans, someone will consider the leaflets to be another Nazi fake ... "

D.A. also expresses his vision of this fact. Volkogonov.

"The fate of his son," he writes, "excited Stalin only from one side. It is a sin to think so, he reflected, but it would be better if Yakov died in battle. What if he can't stand it - he's weak - they break him, and he starts talking on the radio, in leaflets, what will he be ordered to do? The Supreme Commander's own son will act against his country and father! That

thought was unbearable. Yesterday Molotov, when they were alone, said that the chairman of the Swedish Red Cross, Count Bernadotte, through the Swedish embassy, verbally asked if Stalin or any other person authorized him to act on

release



from the captivity of his son? Stalin thought for a minute or two, then looked at Molotov and started talking about a completely different matter, making it clear that there would be no answer.

In any case, Jacob's captivity was a tragedy for the Supreme Commander.

The role of Stalin in the leadership of the Armed Forces on the eve and in the first days of the war cannot be unequivocally assessed. Of course, he was guilty of the fact that the first enemy strike on formations and units of direct cover of the border was unexpected for their command and personnel. But already the operational and operational-strategic structures could create a defense front at least along the line of the old western border of the USSR, well equipped in terms of engineering. There were enough forces and means for this.

But something happened that is still hidden from society in every possible way. The notorious Soviet patriotism and communist conviction broke down when they met with strong

and a fierce enemy. The troops began a retreat, similar in pace to a stampede. At the same time, warehouses and heavy weapons were left to the enemy. Thousands of red fighters and commanders surrendered, and not alone, but in units, and often in whole units. Such a manifestation of "loyalty to the Soviet ideology" was not expected by either Stalin or his entourage. In July-August, about 110 thousand people were captured in the Uman pocket, 328 thousand in the Bialystok ledge and near Minsk, and 310 thousand near Smolensk. Among the captives was the son of the Supreme.

End of August

In the north, Finnish troops captured Vyborg.

German troops advancing on Leningrad occupied Kingisepp (16.08), Novgorod (19.08), Tallinn (30.08). Leningrad found itself in a dense ring of blockade. Until that time, it was still possible to bring food into the city, and from Leningrad to carry out the evacuation of residents and material values. But K. E. Voroshilov and A. Zhdanov constantly reported to I. V. Stalin that the enemy troops would never be allowed to the "cradle of the revolution", which actually sabotaged the evacuation of the city.

In the strip of the new Army Group Center in the Yelnya region, the operation of the 24th, 16th and 20th armies began. The forces of the 24th army of General K. Rakutin broke through the enemy defenses and

liquidated Yelninsky ledge. But due to the lack of forces and means, first of all tanks and

aviation, the Soviet troops failed to encircle and destroy the enemy grouping. Nevertheless, this was the first major offensive operation of the Soviet troops with start WAR.

On the southern wing of the Soviet-German front, German troops captured

Nikolaev and Kherson (17.08), Dnepropetrovsk (28.08).

The total losses of German troops since the beginning of the war at this time amounted to 585,122 people, 1478 tanks.

... The first military autumn was approaching. JV Stalin carefully peered at the operational maps with the situation on the fronts, hanging in his Kremlin office, similar to those that were in the mansion on Kirov Street, near the Kirovskaya metro station, where most of the General Staff worked. It was comforting

few.

Soviet troops left Kingisepp, Chudovo, Tallinn, Krivoy Rog, Nikolaev, Kherson with battles. The enemy blocked Odessa from land. Fighting unfolded on the near approaches to Leningrad. The formations of the Army Group "North" went to the Neva and cut the railways connecting the city with the country. Units of the Army Group "South" crossed the Dnieper north of Kyiv and in the Chernigov region. The encirclement ring around the capital of Ukraine has closed. In September, more than 600,000 people were taken prisoner east of Kyiv. Total in 1941

In the year the Red Army lost about the same number of prisoners as killed and wounded. No one imagined such a situation, and above all I.V. Stalin himself, who was convinced that any Soviet person would readily die for every inch of his native earth.

The army turned out to be not the same as Voroshilov and Timoshenko imagined it to be.

And yet, the fascist command failed to achieve the goal set by Hitler, determined by the Barbarossa plan - in the first months of the war to destroy the main forces of the Red Army and completely seize the strategic initiative. The army continued to fight, reserves were moving to the front in an endless stream from the depths of the country. In separate sectors of the front, Soviet troops tried to counterattack the enemy.

On August 30, the troops of the Reserve Front went on the offensive. The Yelninskaya offensive operation began. On September 10, an attempt was made by the troops of the Leningrad Front and the 54th separate army to break the blockade of Leningrad. There was initial success. However, the goal was not achieved.

But the resisting Soviet Union was needed by Great Britain and the United States. On September 28, Stalin met with representatives of the heads of the United States and Great Britain, Harriman and Beaverbrook. In the evening, when Moscow was already dark, they arrived at the Kremlin in one of the embassy cars. Stalin greeted the guests with a stony smile, firm handshakes, and a welcoming tirade expressing satisfaction with their safe journey to Moscow. He asked about the well-being of President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill. Each of his phrases immediately sounded in English - the translator knew his job well.

Then Stalin stepped aside, giving the guests the opportunity to greet Molotov and Maxim Litvinov, who acted as an interpreter.

Today, Molotov was assigned the role of a silent participant in this first meeting - this is how they agreed with Stalin, given that in the August 1939 negotiations with the German Imperial Minister von Ribbentrop, which ended with the signing of an agreement on mutual non-aggression, he, Molotov, in the opinion of the leading circles of England and America, played the title role.

They all sat down on the edge of the long table, Harriman and Beaverbrook facing the study, Stalin and Molotov opposite them. Litvinov sat at the end of the table, as Stalin suggested to him - for the convenience of listening to both sides

and for translating what they said. At the other end of the table, with his back to the door, seemingly indifferent to everything, sat Poskrebyshov and wrote down the progress of the negotiations in a notebook, touching only on their specific essence ...

As expected, Stalin began the conversation. His restrained smile hid under his mustache,

his face darkened and became impenetrable:

"Moscow, all the Soviet people and our Armed Forces cordially welcome you, gentlemen, to our land. We are very pleased with your arrival, although during these months, How fascist aggression began against us, we lost the habit of rejoicing in anything. Will

to be extremely frank with you: the situation at the fronts is acutely critical. And Stalin began

describe the situation in detail, without in any way simplifying it or embellishing it.

Harriman and Beaverbrook did not take their eyes off Stalin's smallpox-scarred, tired face, anxiously delving into his every phrase, apparently comparing what they heard with what they knew from the messages of their embassy employees, who with firm

conviction predicted the imminent and inevitable fall of Moscow.

Stalin guessed about this main concern of the Allies.

"We would have already lost Moscow," he continued, "if Hitler were now advancing not on three fronts at the same time, but concentrated all his main forces in the Moscow direction ... We need to keep Moscow at any cost, not only for political reasons. Moscow is the main nerve center of all our future military operations. And we are doing everything possible and super possible so as not to give the capital to the enemy.

"And if you can't do it?" asked Beaverbrook, mopping his wrinkled forehead and deep bald patch with his handkerchief.

In response, Stalin unexpectedly laughed and immediately explained the reason for his minute fun:

We saw a funny cartoon in one American newspaper. It depicts Stalin, Timoshenko and Molotov with spurs on their bare heels in a giant jump over the Ural Range - supposedly fleeing from the Germans ... So, if the allies do not

us

help, we are still ready to wage war to a victorious end.

Harriman spoke up. If the United States is ready to supply combat aircraft to the Soviet Union, it is necessary, they say, to take care of the routes of their flights.

- It seems to us that Alaska can be a starting point for our pilots who will ferry planes, and your Siberian airfields, if they are suitable for this, intermediate.

"We are ready to give you information about the Siberian airfields, but this is too dangerous, an underdeveloped route," Stalin said.

"At the same time, Mr. Stalin, you apparently have in mind the tension in relations between the United States and Japan? ... And your treaty of neutrality with Japan? ...

- It is necessary to take into account everything in the complex. Before making a decision, it is necessary to reflect, consult with specialists about the same airfields. - Then Stalin turned the conversation to the problems of the post-war settlement, expressing the idea that the Germans would have to compensate for the damage they had caused to the Soviet Union and other countries.

"But first you have to win the war!" Beaverbrook remarked with hidden defiance.

Stalin's face turned a little crimson, he began to slowly fill his pipe with tobacco. It seemed to Molotov that Stalin would now burst into some kind of angry tirade, but after clearing his throat and stroking his mustache with the mouthpiece of his pipe, he calmly said:

"We will defeat the Germans," and began to light his pipe.

## September

The troops of the 1st and 2nd tank groups of the Wehrmacht completed the encirclement of the troops of the Southwestern Front in the Kyiv region (15.09). Troops of the 37th Army left Kyiv on September 19. After what in

In the city, robberies of shops and warehouses began, and later - explosions of enterprises and other important objects prepared by the Soviet troops.

In the cauldron, according to D. Volkogonov, there were four armies: 452.7 thousand people. According to German data - 665 thousand people, 884 tanks, 3178 guns. By September 20, the enemy had cut the formations of the 37th and 26th armies into three parts. The troops of the 5th and 21st armies mixed up, having lost control. The commander of the Southwestern Front, Colonel General M.P. Kirponos, General V.I. Tupikov, and about 500 more officers of the front headquarters were killed.

On September 25, the troops of the 51st Army left the Perekop positions, and the Germans launched an offensive deep into the Crimean Peninsula. At the same time, German troops began a swift offensive against the Donbass.

On September 29, a meeting of representatives of the USSR, Great Britain and the United States of America opened in a white marble hall, richly decorated in the Empire style. Questions were considered about mutual deliveries and the best use of the material resources of the three countries in the war.

The next day, the troops of Army Group Center went on the offensive against Moscow and broke through the defenses of the 50th and 13th armies of the Bryansk Front. The battle of Moscow began.

## October

On October 1, the 2nd Panzer Group of Guderian and part of the troops of the Army Group Center, which had broken through the defenses of the troops of the Bryansk Front, launched an offensive to the northeast. On South the evacuation of the Odessa defensive region began.

At noon on October 3, Soviet troops left Orel. At 19 o'clock on the same day, I. V. Stalin heard the next report of the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army B. M. Shaposhnikov.

"Finally, Konev and Bulganin got through to me by radiotelegraph," reported

Shaposhnikov. - The tape of negotiations is now being put in order ... The situation is catastrophic. The troops of the Western Front are dismembered and retreat to the lines of the Reserve

front.

"Running without orders?!" Stalin was surprised.

"I guess that Konev did not dare to give such an order without the consent of the Headquarters," Shaposhnikov tried, as always, to soften the situation. - Yes, and the connection with the armies of Konev almost does not work. The 16th

Army is more or less firmly holding on, the 22nd and 29th occupy their former lines. The enemy is attacking north and south of these armies... The left flank of the Reserve Front has been crushed... The enemy has captured Spas-Demensk, and is rushing north to Vyazma with large forces. Shoots have already been captured.

- Nonsense! - Stalin exclaimed nervously, not believing what he heard. - You reported to me that the air reconnaissance of the High Command, carried out between fifteen and sixteen hours, did not confirm the movement of enemy columns either north to Vyazma or south from Spas-Demensk!

"Konev reports that his aerial reconnaissance has discovered the enemy there ... Therefore, Marshal Budyonny has already moved to the Ugra station.

—But what about the Rzhev-Vyazemsky border?! - Stalin saw that Molotov, Voroshilov, Malenkov, Kaganovich, Beria began to enter his office. But it was as if he did not notice their appearance, continuing to listen to Shaposhnikov, who stood with his back to the door, where the newcomers froze.

- The Rzhev-Vyazemsky line did not work, - the marshal continued. - The Germans have already left him behind in several places. In the morning they captured Yukhnov, they are rushing to Maloyaroslavets and Kaluga.

"So Budyonny is doing really bad, too?" Stalin asked dully.

Yes, Comrade Stalin...

Is there anything left of this line?

- The 31st and 32nd armies of the Reserve Front are still holding out.

"Order Konev to subdue them, and let him go!" - Then he turned to the members of the Politburo: - Sit down, comrades. We will think about how to save Moscow. First of all, it is necessary for us to figure out for ourselves what happened

in our western direction, why we missed such a thorough preparation of the Germans. I propose to create a GKO

commission headed by Comrade Molotov, consisting of Voroshilov, Malenkov and Vasilevsky as representatives of the General Staff. - Stalin kept his eyes on Shaposhnikov, about something

thinking. After a long pause, he said: "I think Zhukov should be recalled from Leningrad, the Western Front should be entrusted to him ...

No one objected to the proposals made.

Having discussed the current situation in the regions of Vyazma and Bryansk, having comprehended how great the danger looming over Moscow, the State Defense Committee decided on measures to protect the capital. The headquarters gave the order to bring the Mozhaisk line of defense to combat readiness. Six

rifle divisions, six tank brigades, more than ten anti-tank artillery regiments and machine-gun battalions. It was also decided to transfer several divisions from other fronts and the Far East.

On October 6, the Red Army left Bryansk and Karachev. The enemy troops reached the areas east of Bryansk, as well as the area of the city of Sukhinichi, and began to cover the troops of the 50th Army of the

Front from the north. By the end of the day, the Bryansk Front was divided into three parts.

On October 7, the 19th and 20th armies of the Western Front, the 24th and 32nd armies of the Reserve Front were surrounded near Vyazma. Taking into account the armies of the Bryansk Front, there were about 660 thousand people, 1242 tanks, 5.4 thousand guns and mortars surrounded. The encircled troops under the command of General M. Lukin until October 13 will offer heroic resistance to the enemy, suffering heavy losses. On October 13, only 85 thousand people will leave the encirclement.

On October 8, German troops, advancing along the coast of the Sea of Azov, occupied Mariupol. On this day, I. V. Stalin signed a decree of the State Defense Committee on the preparation for the explosion in Moscow of 1119

enterprises and objects. By his order, G.K. Zhukov was recalled from the Leningrad Front.

On October 10, the Headquarters ordered the disbandment of the Bryansk Front and the transfer of its troops to the Western Front.

1] October German troops occupied Mtsensk and Medyn. The command of Army Group Center drew up a plan of measures to be taken after the capture of Moscow. By order of I.V. Stalin, the Western and Reserve fronts were merged into one - the Western Front, commanded by G.K. Zhukov. The front headquarters moves to Alabino, and then to Perkhushkovo.

12 October. Soviet troops left Kaluga. The State Defense Committee adopted a resolution on the creation of the Moscow Defense Zone, consisting of two defensive lines. A decision is made to urgently evacuate 500 factories from Moscow.

On this day, a secret directive was received by the commander of the Army Group Center, signed by A. Hitler, which, in particular, stated: "The Fuhrer decided that the surrender of Moscow should not be accepted, even if it was proposed by the enemy. The moral justification for this event is quite clear in the eyes of the whole world. Just as in Kyiv, our troops may face extreme dangers from delayed action mines. Therefore, it is necessary to reckon with the analogous situation in Moscow and Leningrad to an even greater extent ... It is necessary to keep in mind the serious danger of epidemics. Therefore, no German soldier should enter these cities. Anyone who tries

leave

city and pass through our positions, must be fired upon and driven back. small

open passages that provide an opportunity for a mass exodus of the population to inner Russia can only be welcomed. And for other cities, the rule should be that before they are captured, they should be destroyed by artillery shelling and air raids, and the population should be put to flight. It was completely irresponsible.

would risk the lives of German soldiers to save Russian cities from fires or feed their population at the expense of Germany. The more the population of Soviet cities rushes into inner Russia, the more chaos will increase in Russia and the easier it will be to manage and use the occupied eastern regions ... "

October 13th. The Red Army left Vyazma.

October 14. German troops, bypassing Kalinin, began to develop an offensive against Klin and Dmitrov. At the same time, an offensive began in the Mozhaisk and Volokolamsk directions.

October 15th. 9 am. Tells A.I. Mikoyan: "Invitees gathered in Stalin's office. As I remember, V.M. Molotov, G.M. Malenkov, N.A. Voznesensky, A.S. Shcherbakov, L.M. Kaganovich and others. Stalin outwardly kept calm. He briefly outlined the situation, emphasizing that before the approach of our troops, the Germans could bring

up their reserves earlier and the front near Moscow could be broken through. He proposed urgently, today, to evacuate the government and the most important institutions, prominent political and state figures; spoke of the need to prepare the city

on

the case of a breakthrough of the front and the invasion of the Nazis in Moscow; instructed to mine the most important equipment according to the list presented by the special commission. The commander of the Moscow Military District, General P. A. Artemyev, was ordered to prepare a plan for the defense of the city, with the task of holding it until the main reserves arrived from Siberia. The government, Stalin stressed,

must be taken to Kuibyshev. It is also necessary to evacuate foreign embassies there, and people's commissariats to other cities, to which they have already been partially evacuated in advance. Then he recommended V.M. Molotov and I urgently call all the people's commissars, announce to them that in connection with the current situation, it is necessary to immediately, within a day, completely organize the evacuation of

the people's commissariats.

We agreed with Stalin's proposal. The situation demanded the most urgent measures. Immediately, a resolution of the State Defense Committee "On the evacuation of the capital of the USSR, Moscow" was adopted. In view of the unfavorable situation in the area of the Mozhaisk defensive line, it was planned to evacuate the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the government today (October 15). In the event of the appearance of enemy troops at the gates of Moscow, the planned enterprises, warehouses and institutions that could not be evacuated, as well as all the electrical equipment of the metro, with the exception of water supply and sewerage, were to be blown up ...

A few hours later I went into Stalin's office. General Artemiev was there. On the table lay a map of the western part of Moscow, up to the Borodino bridge across the Moscow River. It marked the first and second defensive lines,

as well as possible German positions during the battles for the city. Artemyev showed Stalin the defensive lines with a pointer and explained how, in case of need, our troops would retreat to Moscow, how the all-round defense of the capital was organized, how long it would be possible to hold out at each of the lines.

16 October. The Enthusiasts Highway was filled with refugees from Moscow, who were in a hurry to take cover from the approaching front line towards Gorky.

17 October. German troops in the Moscow direction occupied the city of Kalinin. On the southern sector of the Soviet-German front, they captured almost the entire Donbass.

The Soviet

units left Taganrog, opening the way for the enemy to Rostov-on-Don.

18 October. Parts of the Red Army left Maloyaroslavets, Mozhaisk and Borovsk. In the Crimea, the enemy broke through the defenses of the Soviet troops on the Inshun heights and, with the help of seven infantry divisions, began to advance deep into the peninsula.

Night of October 19th. Vasily Prokhorovich Pronin, Chairman of the Moscow City Council, member of the Military Council of the Moscow Defense Zone. "We were invited to a meeting of the State Defense Committee, where we had to discuss one question: will we defend Moscow? First, as usual, all members of the GKO gathered in the government building in the Kremlin: Beria, Malenkov, Molotov and others. Of the military, one commander of the Moscow Military District, General Artemiev ... When they gathered in the room from which they were to go to Stalin's office, Beria began to persuade everyone to leave Moscow. He was in favor of surrendering the city and occupying the line of defense on the Volga. Malenkov agreed with him. Molotov grumbled objections, the rest were silent...

Then we went out through the main exit, went to the Nikolsky gates to Stalin's office.

Entered. There were ten of us. Stalin walked around the office with his pipe. When they sat down, he asked:

- Will we defend Moscow?

Everyone was gloomily silent. He waited a while and repeated the question. Everything again are silent.

- Well, if you are silent, we will personally ask.

He was the first to turn to Molotov, who was sitting next to him. Molotov replied: "We will." So he addressed everyone personally. Everyone, including Beria, said: "We will defend."

Then Stalin says:

- Pronin, write.

I took paper and pencil. Stalin began to dictate: "Sim is announced ..." Then he ordered the GKO resolution to be immediately broadcast over the radio. He himself went to the phone, got in touch with the eastern districts and, using a small notebook, began to dictate to the commanders the numbers of divisions that should be urgently sent to Moscow. Someone, it seems, from the Urals, said that we could load such and such a division on alarm, but there were no wagons. Stalin replied:

- There will be wagons. Kaganovich is sitting here, with his head responsible for bringing the wagons.

Stalin, therefore, did not think of surrendering Moscow.

On this day, a state of siege was introduced in Moscow.

The 20th of October. On the Leningrad front, the second Sinyavino operation began with the aim of deblocking the city. But due to lack of manpower and resources, it was not possible to complete it. Part of the troops had to be

transferred to the Tikhvin direction, where the Germans began on October 16 new

attack on Leningrad. In the following days, near Leningrad, Soviet troops left



the cities of Bolshaya Vishera and Budolgosh.

October 23. The troops of the 49th Army of the Western Front stopped the enemy advance on the outskirts of Serpukhov, near Tarusa and Aleksin. The troops of the 33rd and 43rd armies of the same front forbade the enemy's offensive on the Nara River in the Naro-Fominsk region.

October 24th. Troops of the Kalinin Front thwarted an enemy attempt to break through from Rzhev to Torzhok. The 2nd Panzer Group of Guderian resumed the offensive from the Mtsensk region to Tula.

the 25th of October. German troops took Kharkov. In the Crimea, Soviet troops began to retreat to Sevastopol and Kerch. Hitler, at a meeting with Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law, stated that in terms of the loss of material and human resources, Soviet Russia had already been defeated.

October 26th. The troops of the 5th Army of the Western Front stopped the enemy in the Kubinka area, which is 63 kilometers west of Moscow.

27th October. The Germans occupied Volokolamsk, but were stopped east of the city by units of the 316th Infantry Division of General I. Panfilov and cadets of the Moscow Military School named after the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR.

On October 28, German troops approached Volkhov at a distance of 3-5 kilometers and began shelling the railway station.

All this time, JV Stalin, together with members of the Politburo, remained in Moscow. "Around his Middle Dacha," writes D.A. Volkogonov, - they placed several anti-aircraft batteries, strengthened the security. One day, arriving in the morning at a dacha in Kuntsevo, Stalin, barely getting out of the car, was a witness to an air raid on Moscow. The deafening claps of anti-aircraft guns, the beams of searchlights overhead, the hoarse rumble of many aircraft in the Moscow sky clearly demonstrated the current state of the capital. Stalin froze at the car. Could he have thought four months ago that his dacha would be within a day's throw of a German tank column? Something fell on the sidewalk. Vlasik bent down: it was a fragment from an anti-aircraft shell. The security chief tried to persuade Stalin to enter the house (the shelter was made later). But the Supreme, perhaps for the first time in this war, felt its direct deadly breath and stood still

a few minutes, breathing in the chilly air of an October morning. Then he has  
arose  
desire to go to the front.

At the end of October, at night, a convoy of several cars drove out of Moscow along the Volokolamsk highway, then after a few kilometers turned onto a country road. Stalin wanted to see a volley of rocket launchers that were advanced to firing positions, but the escorts and guards were not allowed to go further. We stood. Stalin listened to someone

from the commanders of the Western Front, looked for a long time at the crimson flashes beyond the horizon line in the west and turned back. On the way back, Stalin's heavy armored vehicle got stuck in the mud. The driver of the Supreme A. Krivchenkov was in despair. But the cavalcade did not stop. Beria insisted that Stalin move to another car.

R. 5. Personally, I doubt that JV Stalin at such a crucial time would have wished to approach the front line just to feel the spirit of war.

The slightest risk to his personal life was not in his nature. In addition, the "Master" of a vast country and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief had many other concerns to deal with such trifles. Of the military, except for the chief of the General Staff B. M. Shaposhnikov, who left no memories of that time, the closest person to I. V. Stalin was A. M. Vasilevsky. In his book "The Work of All Life", describing the events of the end of October 1941, he does not write a word about the trips of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief for Moscow towards the front. But he writes that he often had to work at night, make nightly reports to I.V. Stalin and return from him from the Kremlin at about four in the morning. It is hard to imagine that with such a regime of work, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief had time for out-of-town walks.

November

Nov. 1. G.K. Zhukov was called to Headquarters.

"In addition to the ceremonial meeting, we want to hold a parade of troops in Moscow," said JV Stalin. - Do you think the situation at the front will allow us to carry out these

Events?

"In the coming days, the enemy is not planning a big offensive," Zhukov answered. - In previous battles, he suffered heavy losses and is forced to replenish and regroup his troops.

On November 4, the Germans on the Kalinin Front advanced 16 kilometers east of the city of Kalinin. Their troops occupied Kursk. The Kharkov defensive operation ended in failure for the Soviet side.

On this day, in the diary of F. Halder it is written:

Army Group Center. No significant changes. On the right flank of Guderian's tank group, contact with the enemy was also lost ...

Contact with the enemy has been lost on the northern flank of Army Group South and on the southern flank of Army Group Center, as a result of which the enemy's assessment is based only on vague information that the enemy is holding south of the Don, strengthening the defenses of Moscow and still holding on to the northern section of the Eastern Front. According to press and radio reports, the enemy is completely absorbed in worries about their communications and evacuation. The Russian government was also evacuated from Moscow to Kazan, which in no way contributes to a unified leadership. As a result, one should expect a certain slowness, and possibly even inconsistency, in the enemy's measures.

November 6th. A solemn meeting in honor of the 24th anniversary of the October Revolution was held at the Mayakovskaya metro station of the Moscow Metro. It was attended by about 2,000 delegates from various organizations and enterprises in Moscow.

IV Stalin delivered a speech. In particular, he said: "During the four months of the war, we lost 250,000 killed and 378,000 missing, and we have 1,20,000 wounded. During the same time, the enemy lost in killed, wounded and captured

over 4.5 million people. There can be no doubt that as a result of four

months

of the war, Germany, whose manpower reserves are already drying up, has turned out to be much more weakened than the Soviet Union, whose reserves are only now being deployed in full.

From the diary of F. Halder:

"There are signs of a gradual strengthening of enemy defenses west of Moscow. The enemy is bringing forces here from the east and south. Preparations are underway to repel the upcoming enemy offensive, which is expected on November 7, the day of the celebration of the anniversary of the October Revolution.

On November 7, a traditional parade of the Red Army took place on Red Square in Moscow. The correspondent of the front-line newspaper described this event as follows: "... The clock of the Spasskaya Tower resoundingly threw eight blows on the square.

- Parade, be quiet!

From the gates of the Spasskaya Tower on a white hot horse leaves the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Marshal of the Soviet Union comrade. Budyonny. Towards him jumps the commander of the parade, Lieutenant-General Comrade. Artemiev.

Having accepted the report, comrade. Budyonny, accompanied by a lieutenant general, toured the troops lined up for the parade and greeted them. Cheerful "Hurrah!" the fighters answered the greeting of the Marshal of the Soviet Union. Having completed the detour, comrade. Budyonny rode up to the Mausoleum, easily jumped off his horse and climbed to the podium.

There was a solemn silence. Horns carried around the square the clear, clear words of Comrade Stalin.

"The whole world is looking at you," he noted, "as a force capable of destroying the predatory hordes of German invaders. The enslaved peoples of Europe, who fell under the yoke of the German invaders, are looking at you as their liberators. The great liberation mission fell to your lot. The war you are waging is a war of liberation, a just war. Let the courageous image of our great ancestors - Alexander Nevsky, Dmitry Donskoy, Alexander Suvorov, Mikhail Kutuzov inspire you in this war!

The march of the units begins. Opening the solemn procession, cadets of the artillery school pass by the Mausoleum in a clear and even formation. Battalions of sailors meet with noisy applause. They're coming troops of the NKVD, infantry battalions, rifle units. Commanders and political workers clearly march ahead. Concluding the solemn procession, detachments of armed workers of the city of Moscow, descendants of the glorious militia of the Russian land Kuzma Minin, pass by the Mausoleum. They are armed with rifles, machine guns, light machine guns. They are ready today to go to the battle lines, to fight to the last drop of blood for their city, for their great Motherland.

The cavalry enters the square. Behind the squadrons, machine-gun carts rush with a roar, causing stormy applause from the stands. Passes motorized infantry. Inaudibly rolling cars with anti-aircraft installations.

The Kremlin chimes marked 9 o'clock in the morning with a melodious ringing, and artillery was still moving across the square. Anti-aircraft, anti-tank, heavy ...

Finishing the march of Soviet military equipment, tanks occupied the square. The parade was completed by the passage of tanks ... "

From the diary of F. Halder:

"There is an increased movement (of Soviet troops. - Auth.) along the railways in the Yelets region. On the remaining sectors of the front of Army Group Center, enemy counterattacks of local importance supported by artillery were noted. There was no major offensive in honor of the anniversary of the October Revolution."

November 8th. German troops captured the city of Tikhvin, thus cutting off the only railroad along which goods intended for besieged Leningrad went to Lake Ladoga, and then advanced another 8 kilometers

northeast of this city. It was the deepest penetration of the enemy on the Leningrad front.

From the military diary of F. Halder:

"There are no significant changes. The area east of the Kursk-Tula line remains unexplored. The construction of fortifications in the Voronezh region indicates that the enemy is not yet going to leave the area between Moscow and the North Caucasus.

10th of November. The Tikhvin offensive operation of the troops of the 54th Army of the Leningrad Front began.

11th of November. From the diary of F. Halder: "The situation at the front: in general, there were no significant changes. The grouping of forces and intentions of the enemy between Tula and Donbass still remain unclear. Without a doubt, the entire area up to the Don is basically

abandoned by the enemy ... The situation in the zone of Guderian's tank group, no doubt, is extremely tense. Guderian does not give any details about the situation. He has here at least equal strength with the enemy, and perhaps even surpasses him.

November 14th. The troops of the 16th and 49th armies of the Western Front, on the orders of G.K. Zhukov, tried to carry out counterattacks near Volokolamsk and near Serpukhov. However, these counterattacks, inflicted mainly with the use of cavalry, did not give positive results.

November 19 F. Halder was invited to report to A. Hitler. It follows from his report that the offensive of the German troops is developing more successfully in the southern sector of the Soviet-German front. On the central sector of the front, the offensive of the troops of Army Group Center was "suspended due to difficulties in supply and unfavorable weather." As the main proposal - to develop an offensive against Stalingrad and the Caucasus. Describing the situation for the winter, the Chief of the General Staff of the German Ground Forces assures the Fuhrer that the Soviet troops "are not in a position to launch a major offensive. Nevertheless, he shows great activity in places.

20 November. From the diary of F. Halder: "Our troops continue their successful offensive against Rostov. Heavy fighting is taking place in the northeastern sector of the front of the 1st Panzer Army (14th Motorized Corps). There is a threat of a breakthrough by the enemy ... The Italian corps again does not move forward. General von Brisen (commander of the 52nd Army Corps) was killed...

Army Group Center. The 2nd Army is making good progress. The 9th Panzer Division occupied Tim. Enemy resistance is negligible, and in some areas is completely absent. The 2nd Panzer Army is fighting for Yefremov. There is no enemy in the area between Efremov and Epifan. In the sector between Efremov and Tula, the enemy puts up stubborn resistance. In this area, our troops are fighting hard against enemy tanks.

November 21. German troops captured Rostov-on-Don.

From the diary of F. Halder:

"To the north of Rostov, heavy battles are going on with a numerically superior enemy, who, apparently acting under skillful leadership, is conducting an offensive in dense

battle formations in several groups, two or three divisions in each. There is no particular danger for our troops yet, however, both the command and the troops will be worthy of high praise if they manage to resist the onslaught and reach the bend of the Don.

In the zone of Army Group Center, "in the afternoon, Guderian reported by telephone that his troops were exhausted. The 2nd Panzer Army is really fighting hard battles on a wide front, but in the end these battles are successful and our troops are pushing the enemy everywhere ...

A striking calm is observed in the sectors of the front north of Tula. The enemy only once, having crossed the Oka on the ice, undertook a reconnaissance mission here.

search by forces of a fairly large intelligence party ... ".

November 23rd. The Red Army left the city of Klin near Moscow. The enemy also captured Solnechnogorsk, Yakhroma, Krasnaya Polyana and several villages along the eastern bank of the Moscow Canal. Moscow itself was only 30 kilometers away.

November 24th. German troops occupied the city of Venev and Mikhailov.

November 25. Formations of the 2nd Panzer Group of the Germans reached the southern outskirts of Kashira, advanced to Ryazan and Skopin, creating a threat of a breakthrough to the main communications linking Moscow with the central and eastern regions of the country. Tula was deeply enveloped from the east. The situation around Moscow is becoming critical.

From the diary of F. Halder: "Guderian, obviously, secured freedom of maneuver in the direction of Kolomna ... The Second Panzer Army advanced in the direction of Kashira. The troops advancing northwest of Moscow made little progress due to the increased resistance of the enemy.

November 27th. The troops of the left wing of the Western Front in the Kashira region launched a counterattack on the formations of the 2nd Panzer Army.

From the diary of F. Halder:

"Apparently, the enemy is concentrating forces in front of the front of the 2nd Panzer Army and in front of the front of the 2nd Army. In the direction of the main attack of the 2nd Panzer Army (on the Oka)

Also

new enemy divisions appeared. The situation is unclear. The enemy is concentrating forces against the advancing wing of Army Group Center, in the area northwest of Moscow.

Although these are not large formations, but small groups, they continuously arrive at the front

And

create more and more obstacles in the way of our tired troops. In front of the front of formations advancing on the Moscow-Volga Canal, the enemy is slowly withdrawing, waging stubborn rearguard battles ... "

29th of November. From the diary of F. Halder:

"On the front of the 2nd Army, our troops advanced somewhat. Troops of the 2nd Panzer Army meet growing enemy resistance near Kashira. In this area, our vanguards (17th Panzer Division) were forced to withdraw. East of Kashira, the transfer of enemy troops from the south to Ryazan continues. Enemy activity in front of the 4th Army's front increased slightly. The reports refer to the preparation of the enemy for the offensive.

The possible prospects for the operations of Army Group Center are not yet so clear. However, already now we can say that the biggest thing you can count on is  
This

approach Moscow with the northern flank of the army group and occupy the bend of the Oka northwest of Tula with  
the 2nd Panzer Army in order to use this area as a quartering area for troops for the winter.

November 1941 ended. Over the past five months, the German army has carried out one of the largest and longest strategic offensive operations in the entire continuation of world military history, as a result of which a significant part of the European territory of the Soviet Union was occupied. During this time, the Red Army lost about three million people, including almost two million

prisoners.

Wehrmacht losses reached 800 thousand people.

During this time, A. Hitler practically did not interfere in the plans of military leaders, who developed successfully according to a previously developed scenario. At the same time, he repeatedly urged his generals to carry out various private plans that fit into

the framework of a large strategic offensive operation.

JV Stalin also did not show much activity in terms of developing strategic defense plans. At the same time, he was extremely painful about leaving each new city, each next frontier. His focus was on the defense of Leningrad and Moscow. At the same time, the defense on the southern wing of the Soviet-German front was assigned to the front command and was conducted very passively, which was the result

the loss of Donbass and the enemy's exit to Rostov-on-Don.

Later, Soviet historians will write that this was the result of the preparation of a major counter-offensive of the Soviet troops near Moscow, which marked the collapse of the blitzkrieg of the German army and the failure of Hitler's war plans against the USSR.

Counteroffensive near Moscow Myths  
and facts

The battle near Moscow (October 1941 - April 1942), which included a defensive operation (October - November 1941), a counteroffensive (December 5, 1941 - January 7, 1942), is rightfully considered to be at the center of the events of the autumn of 1941 on the Soviet-German front. d.) and the general offensive of the Soviet troops (January - April 1942).

It is known from the Soviet history of the Great Patriotic War that in the course of heavy defensive battles that lasted 67 days, the Red Army, in the process of retreating 700-1110 kilometers, bled the enemy's strike groups and, gaining time, ensured the concentration of large reserves in the Moscow direction. The enemy grouping turned out to be stretched out on the front for more than 1000 kilometers, and its rear fell behind

from

troops for 700-800 kilometers.

The German command does not give an exact figure for the losses of the fascist troops near Moscow. But, relying on the War Diary of F. Halder, we see that the total losses of the Wehrmacht ground forces from September 30 to December 12, 1941 slightly exceeded 200 thousand people. Even if we assume that the most

active battles at that time took place  
on

Moscow direction, and on others - private, then the losses of the Germans during the defensive  
operation near

Moscow can be estimated at about 150 thousand people

Before, it was not customary to talk about the losses of Soviet troops. Later, some fragmentary data began to appear. And only relatively recently it became known that in the Moscow strategic defensive operation (September 30 - December 5, 1941), Soviet troops irrevocably lost 514.3 thousand people, 144 thousand people were wounded and frostbite, and in total - 658.3 thousand people, that is four times more

how

enemy.

In Soviet historiography, the counter-offensive of Soviet troops near Moscow is given an exceptionally prominent place, and it is presented as a great achievement of Soviet military art. By that time, the enemy in the Moscow direction had already literally run out of steam in previous battles. Guderian and Goepner began to withdraw  
their troops on December 3rd. Brauchitsch also ordered a retreat behind Nara.

It is known that the counter-offensive of the Soviet troops near Moscow began on December 5, 1941. Our troops pushed the enemy back from positions north of Kubinka and south of Naro-Fominsk, with counterattacks in the areas of Dmitrov, Yakhroma, Krasnaya Polyana, forced the German troops to go on the defensive, pushed them back on the ledge east of Tula.

For ease of review, I propose to consider the counteroffensive in three decades, both from the point of view of Soviet military history, and from the side of the enemy.

The first decade of the counteroffensive began with the fact that on December 6, the troops of the Western Front under the command of G.K. Zhukov went on the offensive from the line Sverdlov, Dmitrov, Krasnaya Polyana, the Nara River. The Tula offensive operation of the troops of the left wing of the Western Front began. The troops of the Western Front liberated Yakhroma, Mikhailov and rushed to Venev, Stalinogorsk, Epifan. The operational group of Lieutenant General F. Ya. Kostenko went on the offensive, delivering the main blow to Livny.

The 13th Army of the Southwestern Front began fighting for Yelets.

A. V. Vasilevsky: "B. M. Shaposhnikov fell ill at the end of November, and the duties of the Chief of the General Staff were temporarily assigned to me by the Headquarters ...

On the afternoon of December 4, being at a regular report in the Kremlin with Stalin, I was instructed to go on the night of December 5 to the headquarters of the Kalinin Front in order to personally convey

directive to the front commander to go over to the counteroffensive and explain to him all the requirements for it. When I was leaving Stalin, I also received another instruction from him - in the evening of that

same day to be with him to participate in the reception of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Polish Republic - General W. Sikorski, and it was ordered to be in full dress and with orders.

On the night of December 5, accompanied by the military commissar of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff, Major General I. N. Ryzhkov and some staff officers, I arrived at the headquarters of the Kalinin Front and there on the spot handed over to the front commander the latest clarifications from the Headquarters on the transition to the counteroffensive ...

The beginning of the counter-offensive was determined by the Stavka on December 5-6. In fact, the events unfolded like this. After air strikes and artillery preparation, the implementation of the counteroffensive plan began by the troops of the Kalinin Front on December 5, and by the troops of the strike groups of the Western and South-Western Fronts on December 6. A huge battle broke out. The success grew every day. The initiative undoubtedly passed to us. The unexpected blow of the Soviet troops made a stunning impression on the enemy. On December 8, Hitler signed the so-called directive No. 39, which provided for the general transition of German troops near Moscow to the defense.

Therefore, it must be understood that the person who served as chief of the General Staff could only be sent to the headquarters of the front, which was instructed to deliver the main blow to the enemy. This can also be seen from the configuration of the front: the 50th Army  
v

in the Tula region, it hung deeply from the north over the enemy grouping.

G.K. Zhukov also writes about this:

"On the left wing of the front on December 3, the troops of the 50th Army and the cavalry corps of General P. A. Belov began to defeat the Guderian tank group in the Tula region. The 3rd, 17th tank and 29th motorized divisions of Guderian's army, leaving up to 70 tanks on the battlefield, began to hastily roll back to Venev.

Consequently, a strike by the 10th Army from the east towards the 50th Army could lead to the encirclement of the entire enemy grouping located in the area of Venev, Stalinogorsk, Bogorodsk. But no such decision was made.

On the night of December 5-6, G.K. Zhukov and a member of the Military Council, N.A. Bulganin, left for Moscow to report to I.V. Stalin.

They returned silently. Having reached the headquarters of the front, G.K. Zhukov said: "Well, morning will show ..."

We read further the memoirs of G.K. Zhukov:

"Here came December 6, 1941. The troops of the Western Front north and south of the capital launched a counteroffensive ...

On December 6, the 10th Army also entered the battle in the Mikhailov area, where the enemy tried to hold the line in order to cover the flank of the retreating 2nd Tank Army.



On December 8, the remaining troops of the 50th Army also went on the offensive from the Tula region, threatening to cut off the enemy's withdrawal routes from Venev and Mikhailov.

The aviation of the front and Headquarters continuously supported the attacks of the cavalry corps of General P. A. Belov, as well as the actions of the 50th and 10th armies.

During ten days of fighting, the troops of the left wing of the Western Front inflicted a serious defeat on Guderian's 2nd Panzer Army and advanced 130 kilometers.

Now we take the textbook of the teacher of the Department of the History of Military Art of the M.V. Frunze Military Academy P.D. Alekseev "Preparation and conduct of an offensive with the advancement from the depths of the formations of the 10th Army in a counteroffensive near Moscow". From it we learn that the commander of the

Western Front, G. K. Zhukov, ordered the 10th Army on December 6 to go on the offensive against Mikhailov on a front 115 kilometers wide after unloading on December 5 at a distance of 50 to 70 kilometers from the front line of the enemy. Undoubtedly, under such conditions, the army commander has no opportunity for reconnaissance of the enemy, preparation of lines for the advancement and deployment of troops, and, finally, himself

there was no line of attack. The rate of advance of the troops of the 10th Army, determined by G.K. Zhukov in 12 kilometers per day, in conditions of insufficient reconnaissance, weak fire damage to the enemy and a snowy winter, was clearly overestimated.

The army consisted of eight rifle, three cavalry and one mixed aviation divisions. But the commander had only one tank battalion - 12 tanks.

The army also experienced an acute shortage of artillery. The commander had at his disposal one guards mortar division "Katyusha" - 8 BM-13, divisions, regiments and battalions - from 120 to 150 guns and mortars. Despite this, G.K. Zhukov ordered to attack simultaneously in three directions, which were significantly removed from each other.

The operational formation of the army was ordered to be in one echelon with the allocation of two rifle and one cavalry divisions to the combined arms reserve. It would seem that, these

forces could be enough to develop an offensive in a decisive direction. But G.K. Zhukov ordered to distribute them in three directions, as a result of which the build-up of the efforts of the troops cannot be considered decisive.

It was decided to control the army from Shilov, which was located 85 kilometers from the troops, as well as through two operational groups. At the same time, it is important

What army troops could not organize radio communications due to the lack of radio stations and batteries, there was not enough wire to organize wired communications. Thus, there could be no question of any reliable command and control of the army's troops.

As a result of such preparation, the offensive of the 10th Army was characterized by the following points:

1. Delay in the advancement of divisions of the first echelon by four hours, consecutive introduction of the majority of divisions into battle.

2. Insufficient fire destruction of the enemy before the start of the attack and the virtual absence of destruction of his troops in depth by artillery fire and air strikes.
3. Getting involved in the battles for Mikhailov 330th Infantry Division.
4. Backlog of other divisions.
5. Loss of control of divisions by the army.
6. Slow and lack of initiative actions of division commanders of the first echelon.

Thus, not one of the divisions operating in the first echelon of the 10th Army managed to complete the task of the first day of the operation within the prescribed period. Mastering the enemy's tactical defense zone occurred with a delay of 7-9 hours. At the same time, the 328th Rifle Division, which was assigned the main role in defeating the enemy in Mikhailov, did not take part in this task. The 332nd Rifle and 41st Cavalry Divisions completed the task of the first day only by the end of the second day.

As a result, the offensive of the 10th Army, which lasted eight days (December 6-13) and reached a depth of 60 kilometers, practically ended with the displacement of the enemy from the area he occupied. During this time, the offensive zone was reduced from 115 to 35 kilometers. The average pace of the army's offensive was 7.5 kilometers, that is, almost half as much as was envisaged by the operation plan. The enemy was able, by conducting rearguard battles, to withdraw his troops from the threatened area and avoid encirclement.

December 15th. In order to cut off the Germans' escape route from Klin, on the night of December 15, an airborne assault force of 415 people was thrown into the Teryaeva Sloboda area. The paratroopers intercepted the road to Teryaeva Sloboda, destroyed bridges, destroyed communication lines. Soviet sources indicate that, thanks to the actions of the paratroopers, the enemy had to retreat along country roads, abandoning equipment and heavy weapons.

But this information is only from one side. Therefore, let's see how General F. Halder, Chief of the General Staff of the German Ground Forces, writes about the counteroffensive of the Soviet troops near Moscow in his Military Diary:

5th of December. Not a word about the beginning of the Soviet counter-offensive near Moscow.

December 6. There is concern about the position of the German troops near Tikhvin.

December 7th. "The withdrawal of the 10th motorized division from Mikhailov (Guderian's army) will, in all likelihood, have very unpleasant consequences. A very tense situation developed on the northern flank of the 4th Army (in the zone of the 4th Panzer Group) and on

front of the 3rd Panzer Group. The enemy made a breakthrough from the north to Klin. In the area east of Kalinin, the enemy wedged into our front in a number of sectors, but these wedged

has not yet been localized.

... The events of this day are again horrifying and shameful. The Commander-in-Chief turned into a simple letter carrier. The Fuhrer, not noticing him, himself communicates with the commanders of the army groups. The worst thing is that the OKW does not understand the state of our troops and is busy patching holes instead of making fundamental strategic decisions.

One of the decisions of this kind should be an order to withdraw the troops of Army Group Center to the Ruza-Ostashkov line.

December 8th. On the front of the 2nd and 2nd Panzer Armies, events are developing satisfactorily. It is already possible to think about a stable defense at the final line. From 6.12

the area northwest of Moscow, the 20th Russian army began to operate. We can expect increased enemy pressure on this sector of the front. However, it is not yet felt. The troops were withdrawn from Yakhroma without any difficulty. As a result of the withdrawal, small forces were released, which will be sent to eliminate the enemy breakthrough at Klin. Almost all the troops have already reached the planned cut-off line. However, the situation remains tense. I consider this section of the front to be the most dangerous, since here we have no troops in the second line.

9th December. The enemy is increasing pressure on the 2nd Army (where a breakthrough was made by the forces of one cavalry division) and on the eastern sector of the front of the 2nd Panzer Army. Without a doubt, the enemy has thrown fresh forces into this area ...

A very tense situation on the northern flank of the 4th Army. Since no new divisions have been detected by radio reconnaissance, enemy attacks cannot be

are sufficiently separated in depth, and, therefore, they need to be considered only as tactical. Extremely strong enemy pressure southeast of Kalinin, apparently, will allow him to recapture the city.

December 10th. The enemy has stepped up pressure on the sector between Yelets and Livny... The enemy is attacking the positions of the 2nd Panzer Division (three new Russian divisions are operating). In the area west of Tula, as a result of the withdrawal of our 206th Infantry Division, a gap in the front line was formed. What impact it will have on future events cannot yet be foreseen.

In the area north of Klin, the situation is becoming more and more tense. The arrival of a new enemy division was noted. In the area southeast of Kalinin, the front has been somehow restored.

December 1. The tension on the 2nd Army front had not yet reached its climax.

The enemy's 10th Army, consisting of six infantry and one cavalry divisions, is operating against the 2nd Panzer Army. The army is advancing from the Mikhailov region

towards Tula. Five divisions of this enemy army are newly formed formations.

On the southern sector of the front of the 4th Army, the enemy is conducting intensified artillery fire. The main direction of his offensive is the zone of the 5th Army Corps and to the north. The gap in the front at Klin has not yet been eliminated ...

12 December. At the front of the 2nd Army, the situation is critical. Parts of the 2nd Panzer Army repel enemy attacks. Unfortunately, it is not possible to close the gap in the front line between the 296th and 31st Infantry Divisions.

The situation at Klin does not yet allow drawing any conclusions, but it is still tense. The enemy reinforced his grouping at

Kalinin.

Conversation with Field Marshal von Bock:

1. A particularly critical stage has begun in the situation.
2. The 134th and 45th infantry divisions are generally no longer combat-ready. There is no supply. The command of the troops (the command of the 2nd and 2nd tank armies. - Auth.) in the sector between Tula and Kursk suffered complete bankruptcy.
3. The army group developed a withdrawal plan to the line of Tula, Novosil, Tim. The retreating units will offer resistance to the enemy at intermediate lines ...
4. A very difficult situation developed on the northern flank of the 4th Panzer Group (36th Motorized Division). The withdrawal of the 7th Army Corps to the cut-off line at Kalinin.

The situation at the front in the evening:

The 2nd Army was transferred to the 2nd Tank Army. The situation on the front of the 2nd Army is very tense. The enemy attacked the site of the 9th Panzer Division ... At Yefremov, the Russians surrounded the German regiment. The same situation is with Bureloma.

The 2nd Panzer Army repulsed the enemy offensive. The situation at Tula is difficult. It is unacceptable to withdraw the front of the 2nd and 2nd tank armies in this way, as noted by the command of the army group ...

On the front of the 4th Panzer Group, the enemy offensive was repulsed. According to unspecified data, the enemy offensive was also repulsed on the front of the 3rd Panzer Group near Kalinin.

December 13th. In the sector of the 9th Panzer Division, an enemy attack was repulsed along the motorway. According to preliminary data, the rest of the enemy attacks were also repelled. According to unspecified data, the German units surrounded by Efremov left the encirclement.

In the sector between Tula and Epifan, the presence of two new enemy divisions was established. Enemy attacks are repulsed with heavy losses for him. In the area west of Tula, enemy units are infiltrating through our front.

North-west of Moscow, the operation of one new enemy rifle and one tank brigades was established.

The situation in the Klin area, which is still in our hands, has improved somewhat. The 2nd Panzer Division closed the gap on the front south of the 36th Motorized DIVISION.

Our troops successfully retreated to a new line in the area southeast of Kalinin. Kalinin is held by our units.

Atmosphere in the evening:

Attempts are continuing to localize the enemy's breakthrough in the sector of the 34th Army Corps. However, enemy cavalry units with artillery are already far away.

behind

front line. The position of the divisions of the corps is still not clear. (Soviet troops surrounded the main forces of the 45th and 134th infantry divisions of the 34th army corps,

then

they were cut into pieces and by December 16 they were partially destroyed. However, the remnants  
these  
divisions managed to break out of the encirclement. — Avi. ).

On the remaining sectors of the front of the army group, enemy attacks were repulsed.

In the area west of Tula, a small enemy force broke through. But this breakthrough is so deep that it forces us  
to pull the front line back. The withdrawal of troops is hampered by sleet.

On the front of the 4th Army, the combat activity of the enemy, which in some places wedged into our position, has been intensified. Our advanced units at Kalinin were drawn back, and thus the gap in the front line was closed. It is planned to withdraw to the line of Lama. In the area southeast of Kalinin, our troops were also withdrawn...

December 14th. Army Group Center. There were no alarming reports from the southern front of the 2nd Army. On  
the central section and the northern flank, the situation  
some

improved. Guderian appears to have a firm grip on his 2nd Panzer Army and is gradually drawing it back.

Extremely unpleasant is the gap in the front formed southwest of Tula (breakthrough of the 258th

rifle division of the 50th Army from the Pyatnitskoye area (northwest of Tula) in a southwestern direction to  
Voskresenskoye. — Auth. ). So far, no measures have been found that could remedy this situation.

On the sector of the 4th Army, the enemy managed to achieve small penetrations of tactical  
significance. In general, the situation on the front of the army does not cause concern. Wedge

the situation is gradually stabilizing. At Kalinin, battles are being fought with varying success. So far, the results of these  
battles are generally favorable for us.

At 18.30 a telephone conversation took place with Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, who had previously discussed  
the situation with von Bock, Kluge and Guderian.

The situation on the front of the 2nd Panzer Army. The gap between the 45th and 134th Infantry Divisions has not yet  
been closed. The troops scheduled to bridge this gap are moving up very slowly. Farther north, units of the  
army deliberately retreat from line to line. A difficult situation developed in the area west of Tula. The gap in the  
front has  
been eliminated here. The 137th Infantry Division is being transferred to this sector from the north. Her whereabouts are  
currently unknown.

The situation on the front of the 4th Army. The front has stabilized, but it is held by very weak forces. There are no  
reserves in the rear ...

Kluge will decide tomorrow whether he can hold the front he occupies. Further advance of the enemy in the zone of  
the 255th Infantry Division poses a threat to movement along the Mozhaisk-Volokolamsk road. A report was received  
from  
the 3rd Panzer Group, speaking of a serious situation on its front ...

December 15th. Army Group Center. The enemy is advancing against the 2nd Army. In addition, he is trying to  
expand the breakthrough area near Liven on the southern flank. In the remaining sectors, the enemy troops did  
not move forward ...

The 2nd Panzer Army is withdrawing in perfect order...

4th army. The enemy attacks the 255th division. It may be necessary to withdraw units located north of this division. Troops of the 5th Army Corps also

experiencing

increased pressure from the enemy. In the Klin area, the situation is relatively calm ... "

Thus, we see that the counter-offensive of the Soviet troops near Moscow during the first ten days of December 1941 achieved certain successes.

Soviet sources indicate that by the end of December 15, northwest of Moscow, the enemy's Kalinin grouping was under the threat of imminent encirclement. The reserves of the fascist command were completely used up. His grouping, located in Kalinin, was engulfed from both flanks.

Southwest of Moscow, the 217th Rifle and 112th Tank Divisions liberated Yasnaya Polyana and then Shchekino. On this day, in his report to I.V. Stalin, G.K. Zhukov noted: "Prisoners from the Guderian group show that they are now allowed to wear parade uniforms, which they took with them for the parade in Moscow, due to the cold weather."

And only in the central sector of the front did the offensive of the Soviet troops develop less successfully. By mid-December, the Germans, having retreated somewhat, dug in along the banks of the Ruza, Nara and Oka rivers. Nearby settlements were turned into carefully equipped nodes of resistance.

German sources comment on the first ten days of the counter-offensive of Soviet troops near Moscow much more modestly. There are battles with varying success, a systematic withdrawal to the rear or cut-off positions. At the same time, the command of the Wehrmacht does not hide the fact that the situation in a number of formations and formations was rather difficult on certain days.

On December 16, the second decade of the counteroffensive of the Soviet troops near Moscow began. On that day, British Foreign Minister A. Eden began negotiations in the Kremlin with I. V. Stalin and V. M. Molotov. Stalin expressed his views on

post-war

territorial boundaries in Europe. He noted that all countries previously occupied by Germany and its allies should be restored to their pre-war borders. Eden believed that it was somewhat premature to negotiate on this subject at a time when German troops were not far from Moscow. But he did not argue with I.V. Stalin.

On that day, the Yelets offensive operation of the troops of the right wing of the Southwestern Front, which began on December 6, ended. During this time, Soviet troops advanced 80-100 kilometers, destroying almost 16 thousand enemy soldiers and officers, freeing about 400 settlements.

The Tula operation is over. As a result of its implementation, the siege of Tula was lifted and a significant defeat was inflicted on the 2nd Panzer Army of the enemy, the remnants of which were forced to retreat 130 kilometers.

The troops of the Western Front liberated the city of Vysokovsk, the troops of the Kalinin Front liberated the city of Kalinin.

From the diary of F. Halder:

Army Group Center. The 134th Infantry Division (34th Army Corps. - Auth.) broke through the encirclement. The enemy from the Efremov area, Yelets pulls up fresh

strength

to the breakout area. Guderian exits. The enemy is exerting strong pressure on the 3rd Panzer Division, as well as on the sector of the front south of Aleksin.

At midnight, the commander-in-chief of the ground forces, Field Marshal W. von Brauchitsch, F. Halder and the head of the operations department, General Paulus, were summoned to the Fuhrer. A. Hitler said that a large-scale withdrawal of German troops near Moscow could not

be out of the question. He demanded that troops be withdrawn only from those sectors where the enemy had achieved a deep breakthrough.

"The creation of rear lines is a fantasy," the Fuhrer remarked. "We need to do our best to stay ahead of the curve. The front suffers from only one thing: the enemy has more soldiers. But he does not have a lot of artillery. I demand to make the most of this advantage, which can solve many of our problems. The enemy's situation is much worse than ours.

Several decisions are made. First, the infantry was supported by four groups of bombers and two groups of fighter-bombers. Secondly, retreat to cut-off positions should be carried out only if there is a sufficient number of infantry to occupy them. Thirdly, in the Dubna area, to introduce new divisions into battle, also reinforcing the troops of the 4th and 3rd tank groups. Fourthly, for the transfer of reserves, allocate 200 transport aircraft and transport aircraft from Army Group South.

December 17th. The Kaluga offensive operation of the troops of the left wing of the Western Front began. Soviet troops moved in the direction of Kaluga, Likhvin, Sukhinichi.

From the diary of F. Halder:

Army Group Center. In the area south of Liven - nothing significant. The enemy is exerting increased pressure on the 112th Infantry Division (2nd Panzer Group). Pressure increased on the positions of the 31st Infantry Division west

of Tula. The gap in the front near Dubna still raises concerns. Near Aleksin, the enemy launched an offensive, presumably with the forces of three divisions.

On the site of the 9th Army Corps, apparently, a disgrace is going on. Part of the divisions withdrew, and part remained in the same position. Lost a large number of heavy guns and vehicles.

On the front of the 3rd and 4th Panzer Groups, the situation is even more unclear ... The 9th Army has withdrawn its troops somewhat back and is now firmly holding the occupied line.

December 19th. Soviet troops liberated the city of Tarusa. On this day, near Ruza, near Moscow, the commander of the cavalry corps, Major General L. M. Dovator, died in battle.

From the diary of F. Halder:

Army Group Center. The enemy is advancing on all fronts. Four more new divisions have been established...

13.00 - Summoned to the Fuhrer.

The Fuhrer intends to take command of the ground forces, as the commander-in-chief is retiring due to illness ...

In the evening. A major enemy attack was repulsed on the front of the 2nd Army... The 4th Army is in danger of being surrounded as a result of an enemy strike from Kaluga. The enemy broke through the front on both sides of Tarusa and Aleksin. The situation is very tense. At Ruza, the enemy broke through from the northwest. The 5th Army Corps is retreating with fighting. The enemy is pursuing."

On this day, great changes took place in the German High Command. A. Hitler accepted the resignation of the Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces, Field Marshal W. von Brauchitsch, and assigned these duties to himself. But practically the main command of all the operations of the ground forces was to be carried out by Keitel. F. Halder, by prior arrangement with Brauchitsch,

Also

should have resigned. But Brauchitsch, in connection with the difficult situation that has developed on

Eastern Front, persuaded him to remain at his post. It was also taken into account that, according to Brauchitsch and other

conspirators, only F. Halder would be able to defend

their

point of view in front of Hitler, who increasingly began to distrust the generals.

20th of December. Soviet troops liberated Volokolamsk after bloody battles.

From the diary of F. Halder:

Army Group Center. The enemy attacked the right flank of the 2nd Army and achieved little success ... In the area of the front gap west of Tula, the enemy broke into our

the rear and from there with its ski and cavalry units went to the area south of Kaluga ... In the rest of the front, the enemy launched strong attacks, but our units retreated only in some areas ... "

On this day, A. Hitler held the first meeting already as commander-in-chief of the German ground forces. He resolutely objected to the fact that some military leaders are trying to attribute their military failures to the difficulties of the Russian winter.

- "Russian winter" - I demand to get rid of this expression, - said the Fuhrer. - We must teach troops to fight in any conditions. It is necessary to drive into the consciousness of every front-line soldier the need for resistance. The air force should be directed systematically to settlements occupied by the enemy. Also attack them with artillery fire. Provide protection against enemy units infiltrating our rear. Troop units to form kill teams—mobile combat teams ranging in strength from company to battalion, designed to destroy the infiltrating enemy. Unconditionally take away winter clothes from prisoners and local residents. Abandoned villages to burn.

21 December. The mobile group of the 50th Army broke into Kaluga and started street fighting.

From the diary of F. Halder:



"A critical situation has developed south of Kaluga. Here the enemy burst into Kaluga with a blow from Odoev. It was possible to reject it only after the approach of the security regiment. Otdako, enemy tanks are still in Kaluga ... The corps commanders report, that their the troops are exhausted and cannot withstand further enemy attacks ... "

Dec 22. Massive enemy air raids on Moscow ceased. In total, up to this time, the enemy had made 122 raids on the capital, in which 8 thousand aircraft participated, but only 229 broke through to the city.

From the diary of F. Halder:

"The troops of the southern flank of the 4th Army southeast of Kaluga are surrounded by the enemy, who is simultaneously developing an offensive from Tarusa. In this sector, the situation is unusually difficult ... Despite this, the order to withdraw along the entire front was not given. An order has been given for the use of cumulative projectiles. (These anti-tank shells,

which had greater armor penetration due to the cumulative funnel, were used for the first time. — Auth. )

December 24th. Troops of the Kalinin Front launched an offensive against Rzhev.

From the diary of F. Halder:

Army Group Center. The enemy continues to press on the front of the 2nd and 2nd tank armies. He has been successful in some areas. Especially energetically, he attacks the troops on the northern flank of the 2nd Panzer Army.

Here our troops had to withdraw. A threatened situation was created in the area of the breakthrough between the northern flank of the 2nd Army

And

southern flank of the 4th army.

A dangerous situation in the area of Maloyaroslavets, where the enemy broke through with large forces ... An order was given to withdraw the troops of the southern flank of the 4th Army. The 9th Army retreats in perfect order. The enemy is exerting pressure from the north.

December 25th. The Klincko-Solnechnogorsk operation ended, as a result of which the Soviet troops defeated the 3rd and 4th tank groups of the enemy and advanced 90-110 kilometers to the west. The threat of bypassing Moscow from the north was eliminated.

The troops of the Bryansk Front liberated the cities of Chern and Livny.

From the diary of F. Halder:

"Very hard day...

On the front of Army Group Center, this day was one of the most critical days. The enemy breakthrough forced the units of the 2nd Army to withdraw. Guderian, not considering it necessary to consult with the command of the army group, also retreats to the line of the Oka and Zushi. Due

with this, the command of the army group demanded that Guderian be immediately removed, which the Fuhrer immediately complied with ... "

Thus, the second decade of the counter-offensive of the Soviet troops near Moscow, according to Soviet sources, brought new tangible victories over the enemy to the Red Army.

This is also confirmed by German sources. F. Guderian constantly points to the difficult situation of the German troops near Moscow, to the need for them to retreat. A. Hitler's reaction to these events was also very sharp - he removed from his post the commander-in-chief of the ground forces, Field Marshal W. von

Brauchitsch, and then the commander of the 2nd Panzer Army, General Guderian. Many other generals and officers lost their posts.

In general, the counter-offensive of the Soviet troops near Moscow in December 1941 achieved its goal. By throwing the enemy's shock grouping to the west and inflicting serious losses on it, the Red Army eliminated the danger looming over Moscow. The counteroffensive lasted 34 days. The total width of the front of hostilities was 1000 kilometers, and the depth of advance of the Soviet troops was 100-250 km. The average daily rate of advance of infantry formations was 3-6 km.

During this operation, the enemy's plan to capture Moscow was thwarted, and the troops of Army Group Center were defeated. The myth of the invincibility of the German troops was dispelled.

The German command does not publish the exact number of losses during the offensive of the Soviet troops near Moscow. But, referring to the War Diary of F. Halder, it can be calculated that from December 10, 1941 to February 10, 1942, the German ground forces lost 191 thousand people on the Eastern

Front. A significant part of these  
forces  
was near Moscow.

It is known that during the operation, the Soviet troops irretrievably lost 139.6 thousand people, wounded and frostbite - 231.4 thousand people.

As a result of the successfully developing offensive of the Soviet troops near Moscow, conditions were created for the deployment of a general offensive of the Red Army on most of the Soviet-German front.

The Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, in order to complete the defeat of the main forces of Army Group Center, decided to conduct a general offensive in January 1942 in the Western

strategic direction by the forces of four fronts: the North-Western, Kalinin, Western and Bryansk. At the same time, the North-Western and Kalinin fronts hung over the enemy from the north, while the Bryansk and the left wing of the Western Front covered it from the south. Thus, these fronts were supposed to encircle and destroy the main forces of Army Group Center in a concentric offensive against Vyazma.

As part of a general offensive on all fronts, on January 8, 1942, the Rzhev-Vyazemsky and Sychev-Vyazemsky offensive operations were carried out.

The Sychevsko-Vyazemsky operation was carried out by the troops of the Kalinin Front. Going on the offensive on January 8, they, with a common front of 280 kilometers, concentrating their efforts in a strip of 85 kilometers, broke through the enemy defenses and advanced 80-90 kilometers.

As a result of the general offensive of the Soviet troops in the Western direction in January-April 1942, the enemy was driven back another 60-150 kilometers from the defense line, which he occupied by the beginning of January. Soviet troops reached the line Kholm, Velizh, Rzhev, Gzhatsk, Kirov, where they went on the defensive.

At the final stage of the battle near Moscow, in order to complete the encirclement of the enemy grouping, by decision of the Headquarters of the GVK, the Vyazemsky airborne operation was carried out by the forces of the 4th airborne corps, which on January 27, 1942 began landing 30 kilometers southwest of Vyazma. But the concentration of the 4th Airborne Corps in the initial area for landing was carried out in the presence of major miscalculations and shortcomings. So, the plan was drawn up without the participation of the headquarters of the Western Front, which led to miscalculations in the timing of the transportation of the corps to Kaluga. Sufficient measures to ensure the secrecy of transportation were not taken. The preparation of the airborne operation was carried out with an acute shortage of time, means of landing, air and anti-aircraft cover, and the Soviet command had no experience of such actions.

The airborne assault began with the landing of the 8th airborne brigade in the indicated area. The advance detachment of this brigade, as a result of poor orientation of the flight personnel, was thrown into another area, and also scattered within a radius of 20 to 25 kilometers. The collection of personnel was extremely slow. By the morning of January 28, out of 648 paratroopers, 476 people were barely able to gather. Most of the weapons, food and skis dropped by parachute could not be found. Also

Not

managed to establish a connection between the forward detachment and the main forces of the brigade. Despite this, the commander of the forward detachment managed to capture the indicated area, where on the night of January 28 more than 1,500 people were thrown out.

Subsequently, due to a number of circumstances, primarily a lack of aviation, the landing of the remaining parts of the corps was suspended. Therefore, the 8th Airborne Brigade was unable to fulfill the task assigned to it and switched to actions according to an independent plan.

In the second half of February, the 4th Airborne Corps received a new combat mission. However, during the preparation of the operation, the same mistakes were made again as the last time. The landing began on 18 February. But of the 20 aircraft that took off on the first flight, not one of them completed the task, since there were too many fires on the ground and it was difficult to determine which of them were a guide. The second flight took off 18 aircraft, but only 7 of them completed the task. However, by 23

February 7373 people were landed behind enemy lines and 1525 bags with weapons, ammunition and various property were thrown out.

On the night of February 23, the command and headquarters of the 4th Airborne Corps landed. But at this time, the plane, on which the command of the corps was located, was attacked by enemy fighters. The corps commander, Major General A.F. Levashov, was killed. The command was taken by the chief of staff of the corps, Colonel A.F. Kazankin.

And again, the collection of personnel after the landing was carried out extremely slowly. Four days later, only about half of the people were gathered, many weapons were lost,

ammunition and other property.

On the night of February 24, the corps began to carry out the assigned combat mission. But

there was no promised support for the corps by air strikes and artillery fire. Therefore, significant progress has not been achieved. Despite this, as a result of the February battles, parts of the corps were still able to reach the line where they were supposed to meet with the troops of the 50th Army. But the army was unable to break the resistance of the enemy and reach the connection to the corps in time. The corps went over to the defense of the occupied line, which it defended for more than a month.

On April 12, the commander of the troops of the Western Front ordered the corps commander to go on the offensive in order to reach the troops of the 50th Army. The attack began on 14

April, but was not successful. On the morning of May 24, the enemy went on the offensive. Corps started

retreat, and on May 30 went to the location of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps.

Thus, the Vyazemsky airborne operation became the first combat experience of the use of operational airborne assault by the Soviet command. The command of the Airborne Forces undertook the overwhelming task of preparing for the landing of troops, having no means for this and not knowing the operational situation and the concept of the offensive operation of the front. It did not carry out proper preparation and airborne landing, did not ensure its survivability. As a result of all this, the planned operation did not achieve its goals.

Despite this, the counter-offensive and the general offensive of the Soviet troops near Moscow was highly appreciated by historians. In the capital scientific work "The defeat of the Nazi troops near Moscow", published in 1964. under the editorship of Marshal of the Soviet Union V. D. Sokolovsky, it is said that "The Soviet Armed Forces in the battle of Moska won a victory of world-historical significance." At the same time, referring to F. Halder, it is said that from September 30, 1941 to February 28, 1942, the losses of German troops amounted to about half a million people. The material losses of the German troops were also high. Only one 4th field army in these battles lost more than 40 heavy howitzers, 45 150-mm and 100-mm guns, more than 70 assault guns, 28 mortars, 230 tractor-

tractors. Approximately the same situation was observed in other armies. Of course, these were tangible losses for Germany, which after them became increasingly difficult to achieve new victories over the Red Army.

Difficult fracture

The coming year 1942, therefore, brought significant successes to the Soviet troops. Therefore, from the spring of 1942, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief I. V. Stalin began to gain confidence. He began to think about how to make this year victorious. He formulated his idea in one of the directives as follows: "Our task is not to give the Germans a respite, to drive them west without stopping, to force

them to use up their reserves before spring, when we will have new large reserves, and the Germans there will be no more reserves, and thus

ensure the complete defeat of the Nazi troops in 1942

year."

"Now the Germans no longer have that military advantage," I.V. Stalin in the order of February 23 - which they had in the first months of the war as a result of a treacherous and surprise attack ... Now the fate of the war will be decided ...

constantly

acting factors: it is the strength of the rear, the morale of the army, the number and quality of divisions, the armament of the army, the organizational abilities of its commanding staff.

But the enemy found the strength to stop the offensive of the Soviet troops. The operations carried out at the end of winter - the beginning of spring 1942 did not give the results that were expected. And if the Nazi command exhausted its reserves, then the Soviet command did not have the necessary forces and means to deploy in the spring

major offensives. It took time to create, equip and train large strategic reserves, make up for large losses in manpower

And

equipment suffered by the active army during the winter offensive.

"We were faced with the question of a plan of military operations for the next six months," noted A.M. Vasilevsky. - It was discussed in detail in the General Staff. None of us had any doubt that the enemy would again take serious active actions not later than the summer in order to again seize the initiative and defeat us. We critically analyzed the results of the winter. Now the Headquarters, the General Staff and the entire leadership of the Armed Forces tried to more accurately reveal the enemy's plans for the spring and summer periods of 1942, to determine as clearly as possible the strategic directions in which the main events were destined to play out. At the same time, we all understood that

from

The results of the summer campaign of 1942 will largely depend on the further development of the entire world war, the behavior of Japan, Turkey, etc. and perhaps the outcome of the war as a whole.

Intelligence unequivocally indicated that the enemy would strike the main blow in the south. But is it? The Supreme Commander, drawing conclusions from the analysis of the situation, believed that in the summer of 1942 the enemy would be able to launch a major offensive in two strategic directions - Moscow and South simultaneously. The main direction, according to him, will be Moscow. There was the largest enemy grouping (over 70

divisions), the fighting is still going on. It is possible that there were also considerations of personal

plan:

in the summer of 1941, Stalin believed that the enemy would strike the main blow in the south, but in practice it turned out that he

was aiming at Moscow. Will it happen this time as well? After all, there were no signs that the Germans were transferring troops from

the central sector to the south. And the front line is only 150 kilometers from Moscow. As a result, he came to the conclusion that he would go on the offensive in all three strategic directions, concentrating special efforts on the Moscow one. A

slightly different approach was taken by G.K. Zhukov. "We must limit ourselves to active defense on the entire front, but at the same time carry out several private front-line operations in separate sectors," he believed. The General Staff was largely of the same opinion. True, his boss, Marshal B.M. Shaposhnikov insisted that at the first stage of strategic actions be limited to only active defense, to withstand the blow of the enemy, wear him down and bleed him, and then,

having accumulated

reserves, launch a new counteroffensive.

As a result, the State Defense Committee, at its meeting in early March, identified as the immediate task the creation of powerful trained reserves by May-June 1942, the accumulation of weapons, ammunition, military equipment, and the necessary material resources to support the troops in the subsequent offensive.

All justifications and calculations according to the plan for the summer of 1942 were completed by the General Staff by mid-March. The main idea of the proposed plan was formulated as follows: active defense, accumulation of reserves, transition to the counteroffensive. Work on

plan

continued in the following days. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief received from all fronts the reports previously requested by him with considerations and proposals for the further conduct of hostilities. Among them, he deserved the most attention, according to him

assessment, the report of the command of the South-Western Direction, where it was proposed to hold in May

forces of the Bryansk, South-Western and Southern Fronts a major offensive operation to liberate the Donbass and the Kharkov industrial region.

A pleasant surprise was for I.V. Stalin evening March 21. At the dacha, a surprise awaited him - a family dinner. The table was hosted by Svetlana in a Ukrainian skirt and a fluffy

blouse and one of her school friends. Happy birthday congratulated Vasily 2  
turned out to be

2 Vasily was born on March 21, 1921. In 1940 he became a graduate of the 3rd Moscow flight school. Since 1941 at the front. He finished

the war with the rank of colonel, having 27 sorties and one downed German aircraft. Until 1947 he commanded an aviation division. In 1948, with the rank of lieutenant general, he headed the aviation of the Moscow Military District. In 1952, he was removed from his post, and in the autumn of the following year he was arrested and sentenced to eight years in prison "for abuse of official

passing through Moscow. They gave him gifts. The nanny brought little Galina, Stalin's favorite granddaughter. Sang songs. They remembered the last pre-war years, the time spent in the summer on the coast of the Caucasus. Iosif

Vissarionovich spoke about his unfulfilled dream to name his second son Tarel in honor of one of the most noble heroes of the Georgian folk epic. For a while, for the first time in long months of war, he felt peace of mind ...

In the last decade of March, the Commander-in-Chief of the South-Western Direction, Marshal S.K. Timoshenko, member of the Military Council N.S. Khrushchev and Chief of Staff General I.Kh. Bagramyan were summoned to Moscow. On the evening of March 27, they arrived at the Kremlin and went to Stalin's waiting room. Soon they were invited to the office of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, where Vasilevsky, Voroshilov, Zhukov and Shaposhnikov were already there.

"After the exchange of greetings," recalled I.Kh. Bagramyan, I was ordered to report. Having unfolded the map in front of the Supreme Commander, I began to talk about the operational-strategic situation that had developed in the South-Western direction and our strategic intentions.

During the report, Stalin interrupted me several times, asking questions. Answers to

some of them, as I understood, were supposed not only to help him more clearly understand some of the details of our proposals, but also to check whether our conclusions were sufficiently substantiated, and perhaps also how prepared the speaker was to fulfill the duties that were incumbent on him. assigned. With most of his questions, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, with great tact, sought, as it seemed to me then, to direct our thoughts in the right direction and convey to us his own views on the most important questions of tactics and operational art.

On that memorable evening, which left an indelible impression on me, I.V. More than once in the course of the report and in the course of its discussion, Stalin also explained to us how best to use the combat properties of infantry, tanks, and aircraft in the upcoming summer operations of the Red Army.

After I finished my report, which was very long, against expectations, its discussion began.

Boris Mikhailovich made one remark of a fundamental nature.

"It is hardly expedient," he said, "as suggested by the Military Council of the direction, to undertake an offensive in the zone of operations of each front with the beginning of the summer campaign. Wouldn't it be better to

concentrate the main efforts of the troops of a direction for inflicting a powerful blow on one main direction with the forces of one front, or on adjacent wings with the combined forces of two fronts?

We could not but agree with this remark. In our opinion, the main operation should have been carried out at the junction of our two main fronts - Southwestern and Southern - in order to liberate Donbass and Kharkov. We made the transition to the offensive of the Bryansk Front in the Oryol direction dependent on whether

whether with

the beginning of the summer campaign, the troops of the left wing of the Western Front continue their offensive to the west, interrupted by the spring thaw.

But then Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin intervened in the conversation. Maintaining an imperturbable calm, he said:

- With the timely and sufficiently complete allocation by the Headquarters for the South-Western direction of the requested reserves, weapons and replenishment of people, the offensive plan proposed by the Military Council would be acceptable. But the whole trouble lies in the fact that, unfortunately, we now in the center do not have reserves and other forces and means for such a large strengthening of the South-Western direction ...

position." He was released in 1960, but a few months later he was again imprisoned.

The official version said that Vasily Stalin "hit a woman while intoxicated." Died in 1962.

Then Stalin unfolded before us a small-sized small-scale map, which schematically depicted all the fronts of the Red Army that opposed the Nazi troops from the Barents to the Black Sea ... He expressed the idea of reducing the scope of the upcoming offensive.

A day later, the plan for the offensive operation of the troops of the South-Western direction in a new version was considered by Stalin in the presence of Shaposhnikov and Vasilevsky. He

received the approval of the Supreme Commander.

In the first days of May, in connection with the new intelligence data received, the Supreme Command Headquarters made serious adjustments to its plans. On May 6, the Crimean Front was ordered to firmly gain a foothold

on the occupied lines. A day later, the Kalinin, Western, Bryansk, South-Western and Southern fronts received

directives requiring the regrouping of troops, withdrawing part of the forces and means to the reserve, preparing them for participation in the upcoming offensive operations, as well as repelling enemy counterattacks.

The headquarters also

ordered "immediately begin the development of field fortifications on

positions occupied by the troops of the front to the depth of the divisional defensive zone (10-12 km), engineering work should be carried out in such a way that the battalion areas are ready no later than May 15, 1942, not only along the front line, but also in depth.

On

On the northern face of the Soviet-German front, on May 10, the Karelian Front and the 7th Separate Army were ordered

to firmly gain a foothold on their lines.

Much attention was paid to strategic reserves, which were located so that they could be used depending on the prevailing situation, both on

in the southwestern direction - to repel the expected enemy strike and go on a decisive offensive, and in the western direction - to reliably secure the Moscow region. Therefore, their main formations were concentrated in the areas

of Tula, Voronezh, Stalingrad, Saratov, from where they could be quickly advanced to one or another threatened

direction. Thus, a more realistic assessment of the situation prevailed, and in the first ten days of May, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command takes a more expedient decision. However, another catastrophe could not be avoided.

At dawn on May 7, the enemy went on the offensive in the Crimea, his formations broke into the western and southern outskirts of Kerch. Stalin was reported that the main forces (the Crimean Front numbered up to 270 thousand people) were successfully evacuated. However, when the volleys died down in Kerch and he demanded accurate data

on losses, the summary provided by the General Staff indicated that the Crimean Front, having a significant superiority over the enemy in forces and means, in twelve days of its offensive

lost 176,566 people, 347 tanks, 3476 guns and mortars, 400 aircraft 3. Reading the report, the Supreme Commander could hardly restrain his anger.

In the evening he dictated a directive to Vasilevsky. Her command line read:

"1. Remove the army commissar of the first rank, comrade Mekhlis, from the post of deputy people's commissar of defense and head of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army, reduce him in rank to corps commissar.

2. Remove Lieutenant General comrade Kozlov from the post of commander of the front troops, reduce him in rank to major general ... "

Generals Vechny, Chernyak, Kolganov were removed from their positions,



Nikolaenko, divisional commissar Shamanin.

On May 12, the Kharkov offensive operation began. The troops of the Southwestern Front broke through the German defenses to a depth of 50 kilometers and reached Kharkov. Soon the enemy launched a counteroffensive and on May 23 surrounded the formations of the 57th and 6th armies in the Barvenkovsky ledge, the army group of General L.V. Bobkin, two cavalry and

27,139 people turned out to be surrounded, most died in battles, some surrendered. VIZH, 1993, No. 5, S. 34.

two armored corps. The troops of the Southern and Southwestern fronts lost about 230 thousand people as a result. They started to withdraw. Soon followed the order of the Supreme Commander. General I.Kh. was removed from the post of chief of staff of the Southwestern Front. Bagramyan. Strictly pointed out the mistakes made by S.K. Timoshenko and N.S. Khrushchev. Somewhat earlier, the commander of the 9th Army, General F.M., was given to the court of the Military Tribunal. Kharitonov. "This is a catastrophe, which, in its disastrous consequences, is

tantamount to the catastrophe with Rennenkamper and Samsonov in East Prussia in 1914," the order noted.

The defeat of the troops of the Crimean Front and the failures near Kharkov shocked Stalin again. The situation continued to deteriorate. By the end of June, the troops of the Southwestern Front withdrew to the eastern bank of the Oskol River. In the north-west, part of the troops of the 2nd Shock Army, led by Commanding General

Vlasov 4 In early July, Sevastopol was abandoned. On July 17, defensive battles began in the large bend of the Don. There was a direct threat of an enemy breakthrough to the Volga and the Caucasus, the loss of the Kuban.

On July 28, Stalin signed Order No. 227.

"The enemy," it said, "has already captured Voroshilovgrad, Starobelsk, Rossosh, Kupyansk, Valuiki, Novocherkassk, Rostov-on-Don, half of Voronezh. Part of the troops of the South

front, following the alarmists, left Rostov and Novocherkassk without serious resistance ...

The population of our country, which treats the Red Army with love and respect, begins to become disillusioned with it, loses faith in the Red Army, and many of them curse the Red Army for handing our people over to the yoke of German oppressors, while she herself flows away to the east.

... The territory of the Soviet state is not a desert, but people - workers, peasants, intelligentsia, our fathers, mothers, wives, brothers, children ... We have lost more than 70 million

population, more than 800 million poods of grain per year and more than 10 million tons of metal per year. We no longer have superiority over the Germans either in manpower reserves or in grain supplies. To retreat further means to ruin ourselves and at the same time ruin our Motherland.

...From this it follows that it is time to end the retreat. No step back! So now

should be our main call.

... Alarmists and cowards must be exterminated on the spot.

... The Supreme High Command of the Red Army orders:

1. To the military councils of the fronts and, above all, to the commanders of the fronts:

... C) to form within the front from one to three (depending on the situation) penal battalions (800 people each), where to send medium and senior commanders and relevant political workers of all branches of the military who are guilty of violating discipline due to cowardice or instability, and put them to more difficult sectors of the front, in order to give them the opportunity to atone for their crimes against the Motherland with blood.

2. To the military councils of the armies and, above all, to the commanders of the armies:

... b) to form within the army 2-5 well-armed barrage detachments (up to 200 people each), place them in the immediate rear of unstable divisions and oblige them, in case of panic and disorderly withdrawal of parts of the division, to shoot alarmists and cowards on the spot and thereby to help the honest soldiers of the division **PERFORM THEIR DUTY**;

c) to form within the army from five to ten (depending on the situation) penal companies (from 150 to 200 people each), where to send ordinary soldiers and junior commanders who are guilty of violating discipline due to cowardice or instability, and put them in difficult areas army, in order to give the opportunity to atone for their crimes against the Motherland with blood ... "

and Voronov N.N. In the service of the military. S. 229; Military history magazine. 1993, No. 4. S. 49.

The order was reinforced by the strengthening of party political work. To this end, a candidate member of the Politburo, secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, head of the Soviet Information Bureau Alexander Sergeevich Shcherbakov was put at the head of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army. A new, Stalingrad Front is being created. As part of the North

Caucasian Front, the Don and Primorsk operational groups are formed, the Northern Group of Forces of the Transcaucasian Front is formed, and then the Black Sea Group of Forces. On the outskirts of Stalingrad, preparations were made for a number of defensive lines.

On August 26, Stalin held a regular meeting of the GKO. The situation in the south of the country was considered. On the morning of the next day, he called the commander of the troops of the Western Front, General Zhukov, on the HF. Having inquired about the state of affairs, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief ordered Georgy Konstantinovich to come to Headquarters.

"Late in the evening of the same day, I arrived at the Kremlin," Zhukov recalled. — I.V. Stalin worked in his office. There were also some members of the GKO. The Supreme said

What

we're not doing well in the south. The situation in the North Caucasus is no better. He

announced that the State Defense Committee had decided to appoint me Deputy Supreme Commander-in-Chief 5 and send me to the Stalingrad region. Now there are Vasilevsky, Malenkov and Malyshev.

- Malenkov will stay with you, and Vasilevsky should fly to Moscow. When will you be able to fly? the Supreme asked me.

I replied that I would need a day to study the situation and on the 29th I would be able to fly to Stalingrad.

- Well, that's good. Are you hungry? I.V. suddenly asked. Stalin. "It wouldn't hurt to have a little refreshment."

They brought tea and a dozen sandwiches. For tea I.V. Stalin briefly reported the current situation at 20:00 on August 27. Having told what happened near Stalingrad, I.V. Stalin said that the Headquarters decided to transfer the 24th, 1st Guards and 66th armies to the Stalingrad Front.

"In connection with the difficult situation in Stalingrad," said the Supreme Commander, "we ordered the urgent transfer of the 1st Guards Army, commanded by Moskalenko, to the Loznoye region and, on the morning of September 2, launch a counterattack with it and other parts of the Stalingrad Front on the enemy grouping that had broken through to the Volga and link up with the 62nd Army. At the same time, the 66th Army of General Malinovsky and the 24th Army of General Kozlov are transferred to the Stalingrad Front. You should take measures so that the 1st Guards Army of General Moskalenko launches a counterattack on September 2, and, under its cover, withdraw the 24th and 66th armies to the starting areas," he said, turning to me. "Bring these two armies into battle immediately, otherwise we will lose Stalingrad ...

The Supreme High Command sent everything that was then possible to the Stalingrad region. Only the newly formed strategic reserves, intended for further struggle, have not yet been put into action. Urgent measures were taken to increase the production of aircraft, tanks, weapons, ammunition and other materiel in order to put them into action in a timely manner to defeat the enemy grouping that had entered the area.

... On September 3, signed by Stalin, I received a telegram with the following content:

"The situation has worsened. The enemy is three versts from Stalingrad. Stalingrad can be taken today or tomorrow if the Northern Group of Forces does not provide immediate assistance. Demand that the commanders of the troops, standing to the north and north-west of Stalingrad, immediately strike at the enemy and come to the aid of the Stalingraders. No delay is allowed. Procrastination is now tantamount to a crime. Throw all aviation to the aid of Stalingrad. In Stalingrad itself aviation

5 GK. Zhukov was appointed Deputy Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army and the Navy by the directive of the Headquarters of the Supreme Command No. 170583 of August 24, 1942.

there is very little left."

I immediately called the Supreme Commander and reported that they could order the offensive to begin tomorrow morning, but the troops of all three armies would be forced to start the battle with almost no ammunition, since they could not be delivered to artillery positions until evening.

4

September. In addition, we cannot link the interaction of parts with

artillery, tanks and aircraft, and without this nothing will work.

- Do you think that the enemy will wait until you swing? ... Eremenko claims that the enemy can take Stalingrad at the first pressure if you do not immediately strike from the north.

I replied that I did not share this point of view and asked permission to launch a general offensive on the 5th, as previously scheduled. As for aviation, I will give the order to bomb the enemy with all my strength.

"Well, all right," agreed the Supreme. - If the enemy starts a general attack on the city, immediately attack it, without waiting for the final readiness of the troops. Your main task is to divert the German forces from Stalingrad and, if possible, eliminate the German corridor separating the Stalingrad and South-Eastern fronts.

Until the dawn of September 5, as we expected, no special events took place near Stalingrad. At three o'clock in the morning the Supreme Commander called G.M. Malenkov and inquired about readiness

to the transition to the offensive of the troops of the Stalingrad Front. Convinced that his order was being carried out, he did not call me to the phone.

At dawn on September 5, artillery and aviation preparation began along the entire front of the 24th, 1st Guards and 66th armies ... "

Significant in the history of the Battle of Stalingrad was the day of September 13, when in the office of the Supreme Commander, at the suggestion of G.K. Zhukov and A.M. Vasilevsky, a decision was made to prepare a counteroffensive near Stalingrad and a preliminary plan for its implementation was considered. "The essence of the strategic plan," Vasilevsky noted, "was to ensure that from the Serafimovich region (that is, northwest of Stalingrad) and from the defile of Lake Tsatsa and Barmantsak (that is, south of Stalingrad) in the general direction to Kalach, located west of Stalingrad, to inflict powerful concentric strikes on the flanks of the enemy grouping drawn into protracted battles for the city, and then encircle and destroy its main forces - the 6th and 4th German tank armies. Prior to the start of the counter-offensive, it was considered necessary to pay the closest attention to the defense inside the city.

The State Defense Committee and the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command decided to consider the preparation and implementation of this counteroffensive the main event in the country until the end of 1942. For its successful implementation, it was planned to attract the main

forces and means at the disposal of the Headquarters. At the same time, Stalin introduced the strictest secrecy for the entire initial preparation of the operation. We were categorically asked not to tell anyone anything about it, even members of the State Defense Committee. Stalin warned that whoever needs it, he himself will say about the preparation of the operation. G.K. and I Zhukov could bring to the front commanders only what directly concerned each of them - and not a word more. I believe that such a measure of caution in those conditions was

completely justified.

After making a preliminary decision on the counterattack, G.K. Zhukov and I were asked to leave for Stalingrad in order to carefully study the directions of our future attacks on the enemy and clarify all the necessary details in connection with this. G.K. Zhukov went to Stalingrad, I went to the South-Eastern fronts.

At the end of September, Stalin again returned to the plan of the counteroffensive at Stalingrad. Zhukov and Vasilevsky were summoned to Moscow. We discussed issues of preparing reserves, clarified the composition of the fronts and their commanding staff, areas of concentration of reserves and starting areas for going over to the offensive, as well as the main measures to

increase the stability of defense in the city. With the amended map-plan

counteroffensives were signed by G.K. Zhukov and A.M. Vasilevsky, approved by the Supreme Commander. Its implementation was entrusted to the troops of the newly created Southwestern Front (commander N.F. Vatutin, member of the Military Council A.S. Zheltov and chief of staff G.D. Stelmakh - later S.P. Ivanov), the Don Front, the former Stalingrad (commander K.K. Rokossovsky, member of the Military Council K.F. Telegin, chief of staff M.S. Malinin) and the Stalingrad Front, the former South-East (commander A.I. Eremenko, member of the Military Council N.S. Khrushchev, head headquarters of I.S. Varennikov).

Generals Zhukov and Vasilevsky returned to the Stalingrad region to train troops, to provide assistance to commanders, commanders and headquarters. Soon, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief sent the commander of the Red Army artillery, General N.N. Voronov, Commander of the Air Force General A.A. Novikov, head of the Main Armored Directorate, General Ya.N. Fedorenko, head of logistics, General A.V. Khrolev, head of the Main Artillery Directorate, General N.D. Yakovlev. In mid-October, the commanders of the troops of the fronts and their headquarters joined the work.

November 6 I.V. Stalin delivered a report at a solemn meeting of the Moscow Soviet of Working People's Deputies with party and public organizations of the city of Moscow. In it, he formulated the three main tasks of the war of the Soviet people. The first is to destroy the Hitlerite state and its instigators. The second task is to destroy the Nazi army. "Our third task is to destroy the hated "new order in Europe" and punish its builders... We can and must cleanse the Soviet land of Hitler's evil spirits," the Supreme Commander emphasized in his holiday order. - For this you need:

- 1) steadfastly and stubbornly defend the line of our front, do not allow the enemy to move forward any more, exhaust the enemy with all his might, destroy his manpower, destroy his equipment;
- 2) to strengthen iron discipline in every possible way ... to improve the combat skills of the troops and to stubbornly and persistently prepare a crushing blow against the enemies ...
- 4) fan the flames of the nationwide partisan movement in the rear of the enemy ... "

On November 13, Stalin heard reports from Zhukov and Vasilevsky on the state of affairs on the fronts.

"Shortly, our conclusions," noted A.M. Vasilevsky, consisted of the following. The grouping of German troops basically remains the same: the main forces of the 6th and 4th tank

armies are involved in protracted battles in the area of the city. Romanian units remain on the flanks of these forces (that is, in the directions of the planned main attacks). More or less significant reserves from the depths have not been recently observed approaching the Stalingrad direction ... On the whole, the forces of the parties, according to available data, are equal at the beginning of the offensive. As a result of the receipt

of reserves from the Headquarters and the weakening of secondary sectors, it was possible to create powerful strike groups in the directions of the upcoming frontal strikes with such superiority in forces over the

enemy, which allows us to count on success ... By the end of the third or fourth day of the operation, a meeting of tank and mechanized corps of the Southwestern and Stalingrad fronts in the Kalach region. It must close the encirclement of the main enemy grouping in the area of Stalingrad. Launch an offensive on the Southwestern and

Don

fronts could be 19-20, and on Stalingrad - November 20.

"The Supreme Commander listened to us attentively," recalled G.K. Zhukov. - By the way he slowly lit his pipe, smoothed his mustache and never interrupted our report, it was clear that he was pleased ... While we were reporting, members of the State Defense Committee and some members of the Politburo gathered in the office of the Supreme. We had to repeat the main points that were reported in their absence."

After discussing certain issues of the plan, G.K. Zhukov was instructed to prepare

offensive operation by the troops of the Kalinin and Bryansk fronts in the central strategic direction in order to exclude the regrouping of enemy forces from there to

Volga. On A.M. Vasilevsky, Stalin entrusted the task of coordinating the actions of the three fronts near Stalingrad.

The central headquarters of the partisan movement received the task of intensifying the actions of partisan formations in the enemy rear.

On November 23, the mobile formations of the Southwestern and Stalingrad fronts met in the Kalach, Sovetsky area, completing the encirclement of the 6th Army and part of the forces of the 4th Panzer Army of

the enemy: 22 divisions and over 160 separate units. They numbered 330 thousand people. On the same day, the Raspopin enemy grouping (the main forces of the 3rd Romanian Army, led by General M. Lascar)

capitulated. An external encirclement front was created, passing along the Krivaya, Chir, Don rivers, north of

Kotelnikovskiy. By the end of December, the enemy was thrown back 150-200 km to the west. An air blockade of the encircled was organized. On February 2, 1943, the counteroffensive of the Soviet troops ended. More than 91 thousand people surrendered, including 2,500 officers, 24 generals, led by Field Marshal Friedrich

Paulus. During the offensive, about 140 thousand enemy soldiers and officers were destroyed.

The Battle of Stalingrad, which lasted 200 days, became the largest in World War II. The fascist bloc lost about 1.5 million people killed, wounded, captured and missing. The 6th and 4th German tank, 3rd and 4th Romanian, 8th Italian armies were defeated. Contributed to achieving a fundamental change

How

during the Great Patriotic War, and throughout the Second World War. The victory was achieved at a considerable cost - the irretrievable losses of the Soviet troops amounted to 478,741 people, the sanitary losses exceeded 650 thousand.

For Stalin, the battle on the Volga was a turning point in his development as the Supreme Commander. Clearly realizing the significance of what had been accomplished, he correctly assessed the successes achieved. The main thing, in his opinion, was that that irresistible confidence would finally come to the Soviet people, which would greatly shake the ability of Germany and its allies to fight for a victorious outcome of the war. He probably also understood that the inspiration for the brilliant idea of a counteroffensive, born at a moment when a new

catastrophe was approaching, did not come to him. He, as the Supreme Commander, could only appreciate the plan, which from all points of view looked like a masterpiece of military art.

He quickly forgets about the latter. In this he will be helped, by the way, by many, including those from his inner circle. As a result, after a while he will get used to the idea that Stalingrad, as well as the lifting of the blockade of Leningrad, the counteroffensive near Kursk, the liberation of the Right-Bank

Ukraine, subsequent strategic offensive operations, are primarily his merit as the leader of all times and peoples. Perhaps, sometimes, and only to himself, Stalin admits that he was able to fulfill his role as Supreme Commander-in-Chief due to the presence in the armed forces of outstanding military personalities - military leaders and commanders, from whom Stalin learned military wisdom. Unfortunately, the main character of the war was often forgotten - the people, who often acted as a backdrop for the brilliant deeds of the "invincible commander."

It is appropriate to emphasize that after Stalingrad the Supreme Commander-in-Chief was able to give the Headquarters of the Supreme Command - the highest strategic body - greater dynamism, purposefulness, and efficiency in solving emerging problems. War is a harsh teacher. Failures and miscalculations, huge sacrifices, defeats and victories in the fight against strong and

experienced

the enemy taught everyone a lot: both military leaders, and commanders, and soldiers. Stalin also studied, acquiring military knowledge and a strategic outlook.

On the way to victory

Leadership activities of I. V. Stalin during the Great Patriotic War

so much has been written that it is doubtful how one person could successfully accomplish such a huge amount of work in various fields of activity.

There can be only one answer - I. V. Stalin in his work was able to highlight the main thing, forcing

the rest

conscientiously, with full dedication of forces and means to work in their places. He did not delve into

details of everyone's work, but he asked harshly for the results. And this forced the administrative machine to work at full capacity and even more.

How did this person appear to his contemporaries, people with whom he had to meet and work? What character traits were dominant in the Supreme Commander-in-Chief? What was the style of activity of the first person in the state and the party? What is its role in the course and outcome of the war today?

Alexander Sergeevich Yakovlev, an aircraft designer, twice Hero of Socialist Labor, academician, winner of eight State Prizes, quite clearly tells about Stalin's appearance in his book "The Purpose of Life". "Height is slightly below average, complex

very proportionate, held straight, not stooped, he writes. "I never saw him blush, his complexion is greyish earthy. Face with small pockmarks. hair smoothly

combed

back, black with a strong gray hair. The eyes are grey-brown. Sometimes, when he wanted, charming, even without a smile, but with a smile - captivatingly affectionate. Sometimes, in anger, terribly piercing. When irritated, small red spots appeared on the face, among pockmarks. He spoke correct Russian, but with a rather noticeable Caucasian accent. The voice is muffled, throaty. Gesticulation, as well as movement and gait -

moderate, not impetuous, but expressive.

Stalin, in everything that concerned him personally, looked exceptionally simple. He was usually dressed in a gray woolen paramilitary tunic. Civilian trousers, of the same fabric, tucked slouchy into very soft, thin-soled chevron boots with almost no heels. Sometimes the same trousers were worn loose. During the war, he often wore a marshal's uniform.

"There was an impression," emphasized Admiral N.G. Kuznetsov, - that Stalin had long been accustomed to the routine environment, to the clothes known to everyone (tunic, overcoat, cap) and did not like any changes. So, at the time when he wore a gray paramilitary tunic with a turn-down collar, I only once saw him in a new tunic of a darker color. IN

at the end of the war, he changed his tunic to a marshal's uniform, which continued invariably wear and become a Generalissimo."

Nikolai Gerasimovich describes in detail the environment in which the Supreme Commander lived and worked. "His apartment was in the same building in the Kremlin where

*And*

office... A small entrance hall is decorated with wood. Directly from it is the door to the dining room. All rooms, located along one wall, with windows on the Tsar Cannon and the Assumption Cathedral, are visible through the open doors of the dining room. The bedroom has a simple bed and nothing more. The table setting and the menu were not rich either.

Details the story about the Kremlin apartment of Stalin A.S. Yakovlev: "The atmosphere is modest and strict. An abundance of books. In the dining room to the left, across the wall, there is an old bulky sideboard of dark wood with glasses and, according to Caucasian custom, horns for wine. In the middle is a table covered with a snow-white tablecloth for ten people. In the wall, between the windows, an ottoman-sofa. To the right of the wall is a bookcase...

The so-called near dacha also had much in common. It is located almost within the boundaries of Moscow, in Kuntsevo, among a spruce forest. The house is squat, not visible from the outside, behind the trees.

Behind the gate on the right is a parking lot and a guard house ... A large garden. Greenhouse greenhouse. Roses. The entrance hall of the house is lined with light oak. On the left is Stalin's hanger, on the right is for visitors. To the right is the door to the office. Directly - the entrance to a large hall with a long table and an ottoman in a linen cover, stationery chairs. The setting is very modest. Several color reproductions from the Ogonyok magazine on the walls. On the floor are standard pink paths with a border ... Stationery standard chandeliers.

The situation in Stalin's office in the Kremlin is reproduced by G.K. Zhukov. "This

there was a spacious, rather bright room, the walls of which were sheathed in bog oak,

he remembers. In it stood a long table covered with green cloth. On the walls are portraits of Marx, Engels and Kutuzov. Hard chairs, no extra items. A huge globe was placed in the next room, next to it was a table, various maps of the world were on the walls. At the back of the study, by the closed window, stood a desk, always littered with documents, papers, and maps. There were high-frequency and intra-Kremlin telephones,



a stack of sharpened colored pencils. Stalin usually made his notes in blue pencil, wrote quickly, sweepingly, legibly.

Many of his contemporaries tell about the style of activity of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief in various years of the war, highlighting certain features of commanding troops, daily activities, communication with people around him.

"I must say that with the appointment of I.V. Stalin, the Chairman of the State Defense Committee, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief and the People's Commissar of Defense ... immediately felt his firm hand, - noted G.K. Zhukov. - Each member of the State Defense Committee received a specific task ... Stalin personally ordered the commanders of the armed forces to connect with the members of the State Defense Committee and help them in their work on the implementation of the program for the production of certain military products exactly at the appointed time and of the right quality.

At the meetings of the GKO, which took place at any time of the day, as a rule, in the Kremlin or at the dacha of I.V. Stalin, the most important issues were discussed and resolved ... People's commissars were invited to the meetings, who were to take part in ensuring operations. This made it possible, when the opportunity arose, to concentrate enormous material forces in the most important areas, to pursue a single line in the field of strategic leadership and, backing it up with an organized rear, to link the combat activity of the troops with the efforts of the whole country.

Very often at the meetings of the State Committee of Defense sharp disputes broke out, while opinions were expressed definitely and sharply. If a consensus was not reached, a commission was immediately created from representatives of the extreme parties, which was instructed to report the agreed proposals at the next meeting.

In total, during the war, the State Defense Committee adopted about ten thousand decisions and resolutions of a military and economic nature. These resolutions and orders were strictly and vigorously implemented, around them work began to boil, ensuring the implementation of a single line in the leadership of the country at that difficult and difficult time.

... When developing the next operation, I.V. Stalin usually summoned the chief of the General Staff and his deputy and painstakingly reviewed with them the operational-strategic situation on the entire Soviet-German front: the state of the troops of the fronts, data from all types of intelligence and the progress in the preparation of reserves of all types of troops.

Then the head of the rear of the Red Army, the commanders of various branches of the armed forces and the heads of the main departments of the People's Commissariat of Defense were called to Headquarters 6, who had to practically ensure this operation.

Then the Supreme Commander, the Deputy Supreme Commander and the Chief of the General Staff discussed the operational and strategic capabilities of the troops. The Chief of the General Staff and the Deputy Supreme Commander were given the task of thinking over and calculating the possibilities for one or those operations that were planned to be carried out. Usually the Supreme Commander gave us 4-5 days for this work. At the end of the term, a preliminary decision was made. After that, the Supreme Commander instructed the Chief of the General Staff to request the opinion of the Military Councils of the fronts on the upcoming operation.

While the command and headquarters of the front were working, the General Staff was doing a lot of creative work on planning the operation and interaction between the fronts. Tasks were outlined for the bodies

On February 6-7, 1945, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command included: I.V. Stalin (chairman), G.K. Zhukov (deputy chairman), A.M. Vasilevsky, A.I. Antonov, N.A. Bulganin, N.G. Kuznetsov.

reconnaissance, long-range aviation, partisan forces located behind enemy lines, military communications agencies for the transfer of replenishments and reserves of the Supreme High Command, material reserves.

Finally, a day was appointed when the front commanders were to arrive at Headquarters to report on the plan of the front's operation. Usually the Supreme Commander listened to them in the presence of the Chief of the General Staff, the Deputy Supreme Commander and some members of the GKO. After careful consideration of the reports of I.V. Stalin approved the plans and terms of the operation, indicating what should be given special attention.

The style of work, as a rule, was business-like, without nervousness, everyone could express their opinion. The Supreme addressed everyone the same way - strictly and officially. He knew how to listen attentively when they reported to him competently. He himself was laconic and

he did not like the verbosity of others, he often stopped talking with remarks - "shorter!", "Clearer!". Meetings opened without introductory, introductory words. He spoke quietly, freely, only to the point. He was concise, formulated thoughts clearly.

General S.M. Shtemenko, during the war years, the head of the Operations Directorate: "Members of the Politburo and members of the Headquarters were present at the report. If necessary, the commander of artillery N.N. Voronov, commander of the armored and mechanized troops Ya.N. Fedorenko, Air Force Commander A.A. Novikov, Chief of Engineering Troops M.P. Vorobyov, head of the Main Artillery Directorate N.D. Yakovlev, head of the rear of the Red Army A. V. Khrulev and others. They reported and gave information on their special issues.

Members of the Politburo sat along a table against the wall, facing us military men and large portraits of Suvorov and Kutuzov hanging on the opposite side of the office. Stalin listened to the report, pacing around the table on our side. From time to time he went up to his desk, which stood in the back of the study on the right, took two cigarettes "Herzegovina Flor", tore and stuffed his pipe with tobacco.

Our report began with a description of the actions of our troops over the past day. Fronts, armies, tank and mechanized corps were called by the names of commanders and commanders, divisions - by numbers. So it was established by Stalin. Then we all got used to it, and the General Staff adhered to the same system.

Then draft directives were presented, which had to be given to the troops. Headquarters directives were signed by the Supreme Commander and his first deputy or chief of the General Staff, and when neither G.K. Zhukov, nor A.M. Vasilevsky, the second was signed by A.I. Antonov. Orders of lesser importance ended with the phrase "On behalf of the Headquarters", and then the signature of either A.M. Vasilevsky, or A.I. Antonova. Often such orders were formulated directly in the Headquarters.

In the meantime, we took out our blue folder and began to report the requests of the fronts. They concerned mainly the replenishment of troops with manpower, the supply of weapons, equipment, and fuel. Of course, all these requests were previously considered at the General Staff with the participation of the commanders of the branches of the armed forces and the branches of the armed forces.

A rather detailed description of the style of work of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief can be found in A.M. Vasilevsky. "Was the Headquarters a permanent body under the Supreme Commander-in-Chief? he asks.

Yes. Was. But at the same time, one must imagine that its work was structured in a special way ... It is impossible to understand under the Headquarters the body that constantly met in the literal sense of the word under the Supreme Commander-in-Chief in the composition in which it was approved. Each of the members of the Stavka kept in touch with the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. Stalin knew how important the activities of the members of the Headquarters were in their main activities, and therefore did not

thought

possible and necessary to gather all of them in full force, and periodically called

individual members of the Headquarters for the development, consideration or approval of a decision regarding the management of the combat activities of the armed forces on a given

stage

struggle.

For more than 30 months of my work as Chief of the General Staff, and later when I was a member of the Headquarters, it never met in its entirety under the Supreme Commander-in-Chief in its approved composition.

As a rule, a preliminary outline of a strategic decision and a plan for its implementation was developed by the Supreme Commander-in-Chief in a narrow circle of people. Usually these were some of the members of the Politburo of the Central Committee and the GKO, and from the military - the Deputy Supreme Commander, the Chief of the General Staff and his first

deputy.

Often this work required several days. During it, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, as a rule, had conversations, receiving

the necessary information and advice on the issues being developed, with the commanders and members of the Military Councils of the respective fronts, with senior officials of the People's Commissariat of Defense, with people's commissars and especially those who were in charge of one or another branch of the military industry. Huge work at that time was carried out by senior officials of the General Staff and the People's Commissariat of Defense. As a result of a comprehensive discussion, a decision was made and the plan for its implementation was approved, the corresponding directives to the fronts were processed, and a day was set for a meeting at Headquarters with the commanders involved in the implementation of the planned operations.

Beginning in 1942, during large-scale operations, and especially those in which several fronts were involved, the Stavka sent its representatives to these areas. Representatives were responsible to the Headquarters

for the development of a detailed plan of the operation, carried out by the General Staff together with the command of

the fronts, for the correct and timely training of troops.

It would not be superfluous to emphasize that the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command not only helped the fronts, but often taught them the art of winning.

Much of what has already been noted in the style of activity of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief and the Headquarters is repeated in the memoirs of the People's Commissar of the Navy of those years. "In my daily life,

noted N. G. Kuznetsov, - the Supreme Commander relied primarily on the apparatus of the General Staff ... G. K. Zhukov, A. M. Vasilevsky, N. N. Voronov, S. K. Timoshenko, K. E. Voroshilov, how representatives of the Headquarters, carrying out instructions from the Supreme, often visited the fronts, personally made reports to him, checked on the ground the implementation of the directives of the Headquarters. When I attended its meetings, I always saw the chief of the General Staff, the commanders of fronts or armies there. I.V. Stalin preferred to consult, first of all, with those military leaders who were directly involved in the preparation of this or that operation or who were entrusted with the implementation of the Directive of the Headquarters ...

As a sailor, I would like to add that Stalin also closely followed the situation in the fleets. He called me more than once to clarify naval issues when I asked for permission to conduct one or another major operation at sea. Often he demanded

from

me a detailed report, when convoys went to Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, when English and American ships received at the expense of the Italian trophy fleet were received in England and transferred to our bases, or I thought about the fate of the Baltic Fleet, when in September 1941 the situation in Leningrad was very serious . Such

many examples can be given.

At one meeting with readers, I was asked: "Is it true that I.V. Stalin didn't like being objected to? How could you answer with a short "yes" or "no"? Sometimes Stalin really did not tolerate objections. But in many cases he patiently listened to them, and people who had their own point of view often even liked him. This is not only mine

opinion. In April 1968, I had a chance to talk on this topic with Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky. He directly said:

- If I managed to substantiate my point of view, Stalin always agreed with me.

Of course, it happened that Stalin interrupted the speaker, even very abruptly. But this happened when it seemed to him that he did not know the essence of the issue well. Stalin liked reports that were substantiated, convincing, thoughtful.

Stalin, noted Dmitry Fyodorovich Ustinov, during the war years People's Commissar for Armaments, "managed to establish an impeccably clear, coordinated, well-coordinated work of all levels of government, sought unconditional execution of the decisions made.

With all his dominance, severity, I would say harshness, he vividly responded to the manifestation of reasonable initiative, independence, valued independence of judgment. In any case, as far as I remember, as a rule, he did not forestall those present with his conclusion, assessment, or decision. Knowing the weight of his word, Stalin tried for the time being not to reveal his attitude to the problem under discussion, most often he either sat as if aloof, or walked almost noiselessly around the office, so that it seemed that he

very

far from the subject of conversation, thinking about something of his own. And suddenly a short remark was heard, sometimes turning the conversation into a new and, as it often turned out later, the only true direction.

Sometimes Stalin interrupted the report with an unexpected question addressed to one of the

those present: "What do you think about this?" or "How do you feel about this proposal?". Moreover, the characteristic emphasis was placed precisely on the word "you". Stalin looked at the one he asked, intently and demanding, never rushed to answer. Together

with that, everyone knew that it was impossible to delay too much. You need to answer not only on the merits, but also

clearly. Stalin did not tolerate tricks and diplomatic tricks. And behind the question itself there has always been something more than just the expectation of this or that answer.

Apparently, it should also be mentioned that at the meetings and conferences held by I. V. Stalin, the discussion of issues and the adoption of decisions on them were often carried out without minutes, and often without the corresponding formalization of the decision. It happened that one of the participants in a meeting or meeting was instructed to prepare proposals, revised taking into account the exchange of views that took place, and submit

on signature.

Possessing the richest, extremely tenacious and capacious memory, I.V. Stalin remembered in detail everything that was connected with the discussion, and did not allow any deviations from the essence of the decisions or assessments worked out. He knew by name almost all the leaders of the economy and the Armed Forces, up to the directors of factories and division commanders, he remembered the most significant data characterizing both personally and the state of affairs in the areas entrusted to them. He had an analytical mind, capable of crystallizing the most important, essential things from a huge mass of data, information, facts. Stalin formulated his thoughts and decisions clearly, concisely, with inexorable logic. He did not like superfluous words and did not say them.

It seems that in assessing the style of activity of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, his characterization by the former commanders of the fronts is of considerable interest.

Stalin "was not only interested in the essence of the matter," emphasized Marshal K.A. Meretskov, who commanded the troops of the Volkhov and Karelian fronts during the Great Patriotic War, and the troops of the 1st Far Eastern Front in the Soviet-Japanese War, but also delved into such details that, perhaps, he could even get around. I mention this because in some books we have received a version that I. V. Stalin led military operations "on the globe." I have never read anything more ridiculous. During the war, being at Headquarters and in the office of the Supreme Commander with reports, attending numerous meetings, I saw how things were being resolved. To the globe I.V. Stalin also appealed, because he faced tasks of this magnitude. But in general he

always worked with the map and, when analyzing upcoming operations, sometimes, although by no means always, even "small". The last one seemed redundant to me...

I won't say that I always agreed with how I.V. Stalin resolved issues, especially

that we had to argue, as far as it was possible for me within the framework of subordination, both on small and large problems. But it is wrong to blame him for

lack of interest in details. This is simply not true. Even in strategic military matters, I.V. Stalin was not guided by the orientation "according to the globe." Especially

it is ridiculous to say this in relation to tactical issues, but they also interested him,

and a lot...

Stalin preferred to communicate with people, when possible, in person. It seems to me that he did this for three reasons. First, in a personal conversation  
Can

better get to know the case. Secondly, Stalin liked to test people and formed his own opinion about them from such meetings. Thirdly, Stalin, when

he wanted it, knew how to learn from others. During the war years, this quality manifested itself in him very often. I think that the commanders of the

fronts, the staff of the Headquarters, the General Staff and other military workers taught the Supreme Commander a lot from the point of view of the problems of modern warfare. Accordingly, they also learned a lot from him, especially in matters of national, economic and political ... this also applies to me. I believe that each trip to Headquarters enriched me with something, and each regular meeting with the leaders of the party and state expanded my horizons and was very instructive and useful for me.

Noteworthy is the description of the process of preparing the Belarusian strategic offensive operation, made by Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky, during the war years the commander of the troops of the Bryansk, Don, Central, 1st and 2nd Belorussian fronts. "In March 1944, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief invited me to the HF apparatus, in general terms, he oriented me regarding the planned major operation and the role that the 1st Belorussian Front was to play in it. Then Stalin asked my opinion. When developing operations, he had previously resorted to such conversations with front commanders. For us - judging by myself - it was of great importance ...

The offensive plan was finally worked out at Headquarters on May 22 and 23. Our ideas about the offensive of the troops of the left wing of the front in the Lublin direction were approved, but the decision on two strikes on the right wing was criticized. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief and his deputies insisted on inflicting one main blow - from the bridgehead on the Dnieper (Rogachev area).

Twice I was

asked to go into the next room to think over the Stavka proposal. After each such "thinking" I had to defend my decision with renewed vigor.

Convinced that I firmly insist on

our point of view, Stalin approved the plan of operation in the form in which we presented it.

"The persistence of the commander of the front," he said, "proves that the organization of the offensive is carefully thought out. And this is a reliable guarantee of success."

The idea expressed by K.K. Rokossovsky about frequent negotiations with the commanders of the fronts and armies, is confirmed by many military leaders, including I. Kh. Bagramyan, F. I. Golikov, M. E. Katukov, I. S. Konev. Sometimes the Supreme Commander-in-Chief went

out to

communication with the commanders of formations, in particular, with the commander of the 65th Infantry Division

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during the battles for Tikhvin in December 1941.

Marshal I.S. Konev describes the practice of planning operations that had developed by the end of 1944 in his book "Forty-Fifth" as follows: "Based on the general strategic plan of the Supreme High Command, the front command planned the operation ... while highlighting the issues that came out outside the competence of the front and were associated with the necessary assistance to the front from the Headquarters. At the same time, a draft directive was also being prepared, which in its original form reflected the views of the front itself on the conduct of the upcoming operation ... The number and nature of corrections and additions made to such a draft directive depended on how the discussion of the front's proposals took place at Headquarters and how close they were to the final decision. This method seems to me reasonable and fruitful.

There is a known case when the Supreme Commander-in-Chief went to the front. This

happened during the preparation of the Smolensk offensive operation. On August 1, 1943, Stalin departed on a special train from the Kuntsevo station to Gzhatsk. Here he met

commander of the troops of the Western Front, General V.D. Sokolovsky, member of the Military Council N.A. Bulganin, the chief of staff, General A.P. Pokrovsky, and other officials of the field administration. Having considered and approved the plan of forthcoming actions, Iosif Vissarionovich and the persons accompanying him left for the Kalinin Front.

In the village of Khoroshevo (not far from Rzhev), he was met by the commander of the front, General A. I. Eremenko. "I briefly outlined the plan of the operation," Andrei Ivanovich recalled. - Substantiated the idea ... Member of the Military Council D.S. Leonov, chief of staff General V.V. Kurasov. Questions of material support for the

organization of fire engagement of the enemy were considered. Additional forces were allocated to the front - the 3rd Guards Cavalry Corps, aviation units. I was invited to dinner in the saloon car," continued General Eremenko. "There was a lively conversation at dinner."

There are different approaches to assessing the fact that the Supreme Commander almost never went to the active army. Most of the military leaders of the war years did not see a special need for this. The assessment of Stalin's trip to the front in the summer of 1943 by D.A. Volkogonov. "Perhaps there really was no need for the Supreme

Commander to visit the fronts," he writes. - Stalin knew how to see and know from his office in the Kremlin. He was an unsurpassed master of cabinet leadership. Therefore, his "tangential" visit to the front line was needed not to get

acquainted with the affairs of the two fronts, not to enrich the impressions from meetings with the personnel of the units preparing for the offensive. No. It was necessary for history. Stalin thought about his historical reputation.

In the course of ongoing operations, the leadership of the troops was carried out by the Supreme Commander-in-Chief by clarifying tasks through the General Staff, by negotiating with the commanders of the troops of the fronts or representatives of the Headquarters. In a number of cases, directives were sent, the text of which Stalin often dictated to one of the leaders of the General Staff. So, for example, the issue was resolved on the night of August 22, 1943. In this regard, General S.M. Shtemenko recalled:

"Sit down and write to Vatutin (commander of the troops of the Voronezh Front), Stalin ordered me. - Send a copy to Comrade Zhukov.

He himself armed himself with a red pencil and, walking along the table, dictated the first phrase:

"The events of recent days have shown that you have not taken into account the experience of the past and continue to repeat old mistakes both in planning and in conducting operations."

This was followed by a pause - Stalin collected his thoughts. Then, as they say, a whole paragraph was dictated in one breath ...

The Supreme Commander stopped for a minute and read what was written over my shoulder. At the end of the phrase, he added with his own hand: "and beat them piece by piece." Then the dictation continued:

- "Under such circumstances, the enemy managed to reach the rear of the 1st Panzer Army, located in the Alekseevka, Kovyagi area. Then he hit the open flank of the formations of the 6th Guards. armies that reached the line of Otrada, Vyazovaya, Panasovka, and, finally, using your carelessness, the enemy on August 20 struck from the Akhtyrka region to the southeast at the rear of the 27th Army, 4th and 5th Guards. tank corps.

As a result of these actions of the enemy, our troops suffered significant and unjustified losses, and an advantageous position for defeating the Kharkov grouping of the enemy was also lost.

The Supreme stopped again, read what was written, crossed out the words "using your carelessness" and then continued:

"Once again I am compelled to point out to you unacceptable mistakes, repeatedly

repeated by you during the operation, and I demand that the task of eliminating the Akhtyrskaya enemy grouping, as

the most important task, be completed in the coming days. You can do this, as long as you have sufficient funds. I ask you not to get carried away with the task of capturing the Kharkov bridgehead from Poltava, but to focus all your attention on the

real and concrete task of eliminating the Akhtyr enemy grouping, because without the liquidation of this enemy group, serious successes of the Voronezh Front are not feasible.

At the end of the last paragraph, Stalin ran his eyes again over my shoulder, strengthened the meaning of what was written by inserting the word "scatter" after "Please don't", and ordered the final text to be repeated aloud.

"Please do not scatter, do not get carried away with the task of coverage ..." I read.

The Supreme Commander nodded his head in the affirmative and signed the paper. A few minutes later the telegram went to the front.

More often, draft directives were developed at the General Staff and submitted for signature by I.V. Stalin. Sometimes they were given additions, corrections were made, in some cases they were returned for revision or revision.

The style of activity of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief was largely determined by his character traits, habits, and inclinations.



A number of Stalin's character traits left a generally positive imprint on the activities of the highest bodies of the military leadership.

One of them is knowledge of the matter. "I can firmly say," noted G.K. Zhukov, that I.V. Stalin mastered the basic principles of organizing front-line operations, operations of groups of fronts and led them with skill, he was well versed in major strategic issues. These abilities of his, as the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, were especially revealed starting from the Battle of Stalingrad ... In the leadership of the armed struggle as a whole, I.V. Stalin was helped by his natural mind, experience of political leadership, rich intuition, wide awareness. He knew how to find the main link.

"For all of us," emphasized A.M. Vasilevsky, - it gradually became noticeable how he (Stalin. - Auth.) began to think more and more deeply in terms of modern warfare, to solve issues of military art with exceptional skill. An important milestone was

Stalingrad battle. But, perhaps, he began to fully master the methods and forms of leading the armed struggle in a new way only during the battle on the Kursk Bulge ... I.V. Stalin became well versed not only in military strategy, which was easy for him, since he was a master of political strategy, but also in operational art.

In this regard, the episode described by A.S. Yakovlev. It happened at a meeting at Headquarters when discussing candidates for the positions of commanders of the air armies. "It turned out that Stalin did not personally know the proposed candidate, and He asked:

"Well, how will he manage?" What is it?

Deputy Commander-in-Chief General Vorozheykin replied:

Yes, he is the right person.

To which Stalin replied:

- What does suitable mean? Does he know the thing?

Then Vorozheykin added a few more general data of the questionnaire order.

I ask you: does he know the business?

Yes, Comrade Stalin, he is an honest man.

- Drop these epithets: honest, suitable! Little is honest. Honesty alone is not enough, fools are also honest. It is important for us that he is not only honest, but that he knows the business.

Following this, Stalin expressed several general considerations about the organizational work in the army. He said that modern warfare requires great organizational skills from military leaders ... professional knowledge. Modern

the commander must be a bold innovator, apply new methods of tactics, know new weapons. And some, as experience has shown, do not like new, fresh, untested and

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times of Cyrus the Persian walk on the beaten track. Now such a commander

Nothing

will not work. You can't fight like that now."

The style of efficiency in the work is also noted by M.I. Petrov, during the war years, a liaison officer with partisan formations, telling about Stalin's meeting with the commanders of partisan detachments and the leadership of the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement in August 1942 and when discussing a raid behind enemy lines by partisan formations of Kovpak and Saburov.

"How strict the Supreme Commander-in-Chief was towards us, the representatives of the Headquarters," recalled A. M.

Vasilevsky, "can be seen from the following: "To Marshal Vasilevsky. It's already 3 o'clock now. 30 min. August 17, and you have not yet deigned to send reports to Headquarters on the results of the operation for August 16 and on your assessment of the situation. I have long obliged you, as a representative of the Headquarters, to send special reports to the Headquarters by the end of each day of the operation ... "So began

the message I received on August 17, 1943, which has remained in my memory to this day, I.V. Stalin

caused

the fact that I, being on the first day of the front-line operation in the troops of the army of V.V. Glagolev, as a representative of the Stavka on the

Southwestern and Southern fronts, was delayed in sending the next report to Stalin for several hours.

Directing to the fronts, the Supreme Commander usually said: "The decision has been made, the operation has been planned, directives have been given to the fronts, and now before the Headquarters rises

the main task is to help the command and troops of the fronts to correctly understand the tasks set

tasks before them, prepare well and successfully complete them. And you, as responsible representatives of the Headquarters, will be obliged to do this.

We read about the same in the following excerpt from the directive of the Headquarters following the results of the same Kerch operation in the Crimea, sent to the fronts and armies in May 1942 and played a large role in organizing and conducting the Stalingrad, and subsequent strategic operations. "Comrades Kozlov and Mekhlis believed that their main task was to issue an order and that the issuance of an order ended their duties in command of the troops. They did not understand that issuing an order is only

start

work and that the main task of the command is to ensure the execution of the order, in

bringing the order to the troops, in organizing assistance to the troops in fulfilling the order of the command. As the analysis of the course of the operation showed, the front command issued its orders without taking into account the situation at the front, not knowing the true position of the troops. The front command did not even ensure the delivery of its orders to the army, as was the case with the order for the 51st Army to cover the

withdrawal of all front forces behind the Turkish Wall - an order that was not delivered to the commander. On the critical days of the operation, the command of the Crimean Front and Comrade Mekhlis, instead of personally influencing the course of the operation, spent time at many hours of

fruitless meetings of the Military Council ... "And further:" ... the task is to ensure that our command staff decisively put an end to vicious methods of bureaucratic-paper leadership and command and control, was not limited to issuing orders, but often visited the troops, armies, divisions and helped his subordinates in carrying out the orders of the command ... "

These most valuable demands, which the Headquarters made to the command and staffs of all the Armed Forces, she extended to all employees of the Headquarters and the People's Commissariat of Defense.

High efficiency, clarity in work, the ability to organize work, to direct people to solve the main problems - one of the character traits of I.V. Stalin.

Indeed, as contemporaries note and as documents testify, during the day he held five to seven meetings of the State Defense Committee, the Headquarters, the Council of People's Commissars, meetings with

heads of people's commissariats, fronts and armies, members of the Central Committee, employees of the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement, diplomats, designers, politicians. Often, one meeting ends just as another begins. In addition, he

looked through a lot of ciphers, other documents of a military, diplomatic, political, economic nature. A lot of time was spent on negotiations that were conducted with various categories of leaders. It is characteristic that almost always solutions

By

discussed issues were taken immediately. The Supreme Commander paid much attention to the organization of control over execution, often rechecking the most

important data.

N.G. Kuznetsov, speaking about the course of the work of the Crimean Conference, notes that "a few hours before the next meeting of the conference, Stalin gathered the members of the delegation, gave almost everyone a specific task: to study such and such a question, to find out with

something to contact. It was felt that he carefully and comprehensively prepared for each meeting with the heads of the allied powers. Stalin had an excellent memory, and yet he did not rely on it. I checked everything again and again, looked through documents, records, listened to the opinions of the members of the delegation. He taught others not to rely on memory."

"I.V. Stalin almost did not leave himself free time, wrote S.M. Shtemenko. - He lived to work, and did not change the habit of doing business usually until 3-4 o'clock in the morning, or even later, and from 10 o'clock he again got down to business. He is of this order

forced

adhere to all other people who had a relationship with him, including the General Staff ... "

The support in the work of I.V. Stalin as the Supreme Commander-in-Chief was the General Staff. CM. Shtemenko recalled:

"Stalin established the order of round-the-clock work of the General Staff and personally regulated the time of its leadership. For example, the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, to whose post A. I. Antonov arrived in December 1942, was supposed to be on duty for 17-18 hours a day. And I, who had held the position of head of the Operational Directorate since May 1943, was allowed to rest from 14 to 18-19 hours. They were spelled out the same way.

watch

work and leisure for all other executives. Reports to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief were made, as a rule, three times a day. The first - at 10-11 o'clock in the afternoon, usually by phone. In the evening, at 4-5 pm, the Deputy Chief of the General Staff reported. At night we went to

Headquarters with a final report for the day.

Stalin strictly regulated the daily routine, demanding the same from his subordinates. "21

October 1941, I was called to Headquarters, - recalled General Philip Ivanovich Gashkov, during the war years the head of the military mission in England and the USA, commander of the 10th, 4th shock, 1st guards armies, troops of the Bryansk and Voronezh fronts, since April 1943 - Deputy People's Commissar of Defense for

Personnel. - Appointed time - 11.50. At once

was accepted by the Supreme Commander. B.M. was with him. Shaposhnikov, Chief of the General Staff. There was a pause after the greeting. Stalin was silent for a minute, pacing around the office. Then he came close and slowly, very seriously and in a low voice said:

We know that you are striving for the front. It's right?

"Yes, it is, Comrade Stalin.

"We have the intention of appointing you as commander of the army. How do you like it?

- Only good ... Thank you for your trust.

"At this time, the question is clear. Consider it resolved. For further questions, please contact Comrade Shaposhnikov. .."

On the part of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, high demands were placed on the content of the information he received in terms of its reliability, as well as the persuasiveness of the proposals made. "Without accurate and reasonable calculations, go to I.V. It was impossible for Stalin," said D.F. Ustinov. A similar idea was expressed by Konstantin Fedorovich Telegin, during the war years a member of the Military Council of the Moscow Military District, the Moscow Defense Zone, and a number of fronts. Listening to the proposals, Stalin agreed with those of them that, in his opinion, were reasonable. It is characteristic in this respect that, according to the report of N.N. Voronov, the dates for the start of the offensive operation of the troops of the Don Front were

postponed in January 1943, the troops

Kalinin Front in August. Worthy of attention is the call to the Headquarters of General M.E. Katukov in connection with his appointment to the post of commander of the 1st Tank Army.

"I came to the Kremlin for an appointment with the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, as he was, in felt boots, wadded trousers, a soldier's tunic," recalled Mikhail Efimovich. - Stalin was pacing around the office, at the table I noticed the commander of the armored forces Ya.N.

Fedorenko and a member of the Military Council N.I. Biryukov, Commander of the North-Western Front S.K. Timoshenko and his chief of staff V.M. Zlobin, as well as the head of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army A.A. Shcherbakov.

After saying hello, the Supreme Commander asked:

- How, comrade Katukov, will you cope if we put you in command of a tank army?

I was taken aback ... I thanked for the trust and replied that I hope to cope ...

- Who will we give Katukov as a member of the Military Council of the Army? Stalin asked Shcherbakov.

He replied that Fedorenko and Biryukov recommended Popel.

— How do you look at it, Katukov? Stalin asked.

I replied that Comrade Popel was a suitable candidate.

“Well, we’ll decide on that,” said Stalin.

The Supreme Commander knew how to win over people. This is evidenced by many of those who spoke with him.

“On February 4, 1943, we (K.K. Rokossovsky and N.N. Voronov. - Auth.) flew to Moscow. On the same day they went to the Kremlin and were received by Stalin. Seeing us, he approached with quick steps and, without letting us report our arrival according to the regulations, began to shake hands with us, congratulating us on the successful completion of the operation to eliminate the enemy grouping ... We talked for a long time. Stalin expressed some thoughts about the future development of hostilities. Parting words of wishes for new successes, we left his office. I cannot keep silent about the fact that Stalin at the right moments knew how to charm his interlocutor with warmth and attention, to make him remember for a long time every meeting with

him.”

“The atmosphere of our meetings, me and Stalin, was the most cordial,” noted British Prime Minister W. Churchill, talking about the Tehran Conference.

I never suspected that he could be so frank, so conducive to conducting serious and difficult conversations. A similar opinion was expressed by US President F. Roosevelt, Chairman of the Provisional Government of the French Republic Charles de Gaulle, French writer Henri Barbusse, author of the book "Stalin", published in Paris, and other foreign statesmen and public figures.

Stalin often showed concern for those around him, for their working conditions, and paid attention to their needs. This character trait is emphasized in the memoirs of I. V. Tyulenev, A. I. Eremenko, S. M. Shtemenko, N. M. Kharlamov,

D. F. Ustinov, A. S. Yakovlev.

Here is how, for example, Fedor Efimovich Bokov, then Commissar of the General Staff, describes his first meeting:

“I entered his office together with an employee of the Operational Directorate, General P. G. Tikhomirov. Stalin stood at the window, then went to meet us. We introduced ourselves. The Supreme Commander shook hands with us, looking directly and intently into our eyes.

- So that's what you are, Bokov ... Report, please, what's new in the situation in the Stalingrad direction ...

After the report of I.V. Stalin detained me and asked me in detail about the situation in the General Staff, its people, and their needs.

After a while, a telephone conversation took place between the Supreme Commander-in-Chief and General Bokov from the office of A.S. Shcherbakov, to whom Fedor Efimovich wished to be appointed to the active army.

... Alexander Sergeevich handed me the phone:

Comrade Stalin will speak with you.

Somewhat agitated, I reported:

"General Bokov is on the phone. I hear you, Comrade Stalin.

A characteristic guttural voice was heard. As usual, Stalin asked in short, precise phrases:

- How is your health? Do you have any requests for me?
- Health is normal, no requests.
- Was it Shcherbakov who persuaded you to go to the Fifth shock or did you really want to?
- Myself...
- So, by yourself? Well, I don't mind. Get out faster. A new army commander will soon arrive... Goodbye!"

On October 14, 1941, the seriously wounded commander of the Bryansk Front, General A.I. Eremenko. He underwent surgery at the Central Military Hospital. On the night of October 15, I.V. visited Eremenko in the ward. Stalin. A friendly conversation took place.

"On October 28, 1941," A.M. Vasilevsky recalled, "four of our operational group of the General Staff were awarded the next military ranks on the initiative of Stalin ... This attention shown to us touched us to the core ... I also recall other fragments. On especially stressful days, he repeatedly told us, responsible employees of the General Staff, that we are obliged to find at least five or six hours of rest per day for ourselves and our subordinates, otherwise, he emphasized, fruitful work cannot be done. In the October days of the battle for Moscow, Stalin set a rest period for me from 4 to 10 o'clock in the morning and checked whether this requirement was being met. Cases of infringement caused extremely serious and most unpleasant conversations for me. Of course, this was not a petty guardianship, but a necessity caused by the situation. The most intense work, and sometimes the inability to organize one's time, the desire to take on the fulfillment of many responsibilities often forced responsible workers to forget about sleep. And this, too, could not but affect their performance, and therefore, in fact ...

I remember how hard it was for the commander of the North Caucasian Front, I. Ye. Petrov, to master offensive actions ... Some people have already made a proposal for his release. But the Supreme Commander replied:

"Petrov should not be released from work, but taught to conduct an offensive ..."

Stalin could admit his mistakes, miscalculations, did not insist on his own, if he was convinced of the inappropriateness of certain decisions.

"Speaking of his imperious character and severity, which, as you know, crossed the boundaries of legality," emphasized N.G. Kuznetsov, one cannot fail to note the following: Stalin could

be self-critical about their actions and admit their mistakes. So, at the end of the war, I personally heard from his lips about an erroneous assessment of the situation on the eve of the war. It is widely known how, at one of the receptions immediately after the war, Stalin admitted what a "desperate situation" the country found itself in during the first years of the war, and, paying tribute to the restraint of the people, said bluntly that in such a case, the people could "ask" the government to leave as failed."

"At one of the meetings of the State Defense Committee," recalled N.N. Voronov, - I again raised the question of strengthening our anti-tank artillery. He substantiated his proposals with data on the appearance of new enemy tanks on the fronts. Stalin unexpectedly took my arguments into question, even began to accuse me of alarmism ...

I left the meeting of the Defense Committee with a stone in my heart. It was very painful that I could not prove my case, but it was even more painful that no one supported me. And the data on new enemy tanks kept coming, confirming that my conclusions are correct: we definitely need more powerful anti-tank guns.

Once I was called to the State Defense Committee. Stalin met with the words:

- But you were right when you reported to us about the appearance of new tanks with thicker armor from the enemy.

Interrupting the meeting, he began to ask me questions about which of our guns would be able to successfully fight these tanks. We are talking about a new hull 100-millimeter cannon."

"November 23, 1943," noted Marshal I.S. Konev, - I reported to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief on the battles beyond the Dnieper, on the conquered large strategic foothold ... Stalin expressed the desire to develop the success achieved ... He insisted on

this. I reported that, having been continuously in battle for about four months, the fighters were physically tired, the troops needed rest and replenishment. Therefore, he asked permission to temporarily go on the defensive at the line he occupied. I.V. Stalin in the end ... agreed with my proposals.

Stalin sought to learn the basics of military art. As D.A. Volkogonov, during the war he became acquainted with a number of works on military art, in

volume

including the works of Napoleon, Suvorov, Clausewitz. Many military leaders, primarily B.M., had a positive influence on his formation as the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. Shaposhnikov, G.K. Zhukov, A.M. Vasilevsky, A.I. Antonov.

According to contemporaries, Shaposhnikov occupied a special place among them. This was a man to whom Stalin did not hesitate to turn for clarification, advice, and help. Even when Boris Mikhailovich left the General

Staff for health reasons, he called him quite often and invited him to meetings of the State Defense Committee and the

Headquarters. The former tsarist colonel of the General Staff, with his intelligence and deep military knowledge, disarmed the Supreme Commander. These qualities of his helped Shaposhnikov unobtrusively, tactfully teach Stalin the understanding of both military strategy and operational art.

In Zhukov, Stalin saw a talented military leader, a strong-willed executor of the decisions of the Headquarters, but also a person akin to himself in the sense of decisiveness, forceful pressure. It seemed to him that Georgy

Konstantinovich was capable, in spite of everything, of carrying out his decisions in

life. Zhukov's unbending, hard character was especially felt by Stalin at the beginning of the war. This appealed to him. The Supreme Commander knew that at critical moments Zhukov could be ruthless and uncompromising. He also appreciated Zhukov's flexible, bold thinking, his ability to see the prospect of the development of military events, to penetrate

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enemy intentions.

Vasilevsky was one of the military leaders who became a kind of link between Stalin and the front. Alexander Mikhailovich showed himself well both as a representative of the Headquarters and as commander of the front troops. According to Stalin, Marshal Vasilevsky was the kind of person you could rely on and who acted equally confidently in critical situations of defensive battles and in organizing major offensive operations. Nature endowed him with a rare gift to cover the main points literally on the go, draw reasonable conclusions, and predict the situation. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief, eyewitnesses noted, felt a constant need to consult with Alexander Mikhailovich, to hear his unhurried, laconic report, similar to reflection.

Frequent communication I.V. Stalin, starting from the middle of 1943, with A.I. Antonov (being since December 1942 the first deputy chief of the General Staff, he often

replaced A.M. Vasilevsky, who traveled to the fronts), who had excellent theoretical training, smart and laconic, made this general one of the closest military assistants to the Supreme Commander. In him, Stalin appreciated pedantry, deep military knowledge, organization and composure in work, diligence, endurance, his desire to rely on calculations. The merit of Alexei

Innokent'evich was mainly in the fact that he was able to achieve a close link between the activities of the General Staff and the work of the main departments of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the military-economic departments. High culture, well-thought-out proposals both in the main and in the little things, the logical presentation of thoughts, the ability to convince the Supreme Commander-in-Chief to this gifted staff worker.

Of course, the negative character traits of its leader also had a significant impact on the activities of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. Stalin had a lot of them. Many of them

already noted: irritability, irascibility, intolerance, suspicion, excessive conceit, vindictiveness.

"It's hard to say," emphasized G.K. Zhukov, what trait of character prevailed in him. A versatile and talented person, I.V. Stalin was not equal. He had a strong will, a secretive and impulsive character. Usually calm and reasonable, at times he fell into acute irritation. Then objectivity betrayed him, he changed dramatically before his eyes, turned even paler, his eyes became heavy, hard. I did not know many daredevils who could withstand Stalin's wrath and parry the blow. Eyewitnesses noticed that in such a situation his pupils acquired a yellowish tint, no one could know how the person's report would end, according to

towards

to whom anger was directed.

"Stalin was often rude and cruel. Very cruel," said V.P. Pronin. The rigidity of character, his suspicion often led to force, often



repressive style of activity, frequent reshuffling of front and army commanders, fear-mongering. There are many examples of this.

So, on the third day of the war, on his instructions, K.A. was arrested. Meretskov, in the summer of 1941, Stalin accelerated the drafting of the sentence against D.G. Pavlov, V.E. Klimovskikh, A.T. Grigoriev and A.A. Korobkov, demanding that it be carried out immediately and

bringing to the leadership of the fronts. He personally prepared order No. 270, on

on the basis of which the commanders of the 28th, 12th armies, Generals V.A. Kachanov and P.G. Monday in absentia were sentenced to death. At the same time, he authorized the arrest of a large group of commanders, among

whom were General F.K. Kuzmin, head of the department tactics

Military Academy. M.V. Frunze, General V.A. Melikov, head of the faculty of the Academy of the General Staff, General

N.I. Trubetskoy, head of the Military Communications Department of the Red Army. Somewhat later, General N.A. was sentenced to death. Cry.

Characteristic is the assessment made by I.V. Stalin's activities L.3. Mehlis on the Western Front in the summer of 1941. On July 6, Stalin received a telegram from him with the following content:

"Moscow, the Kremlin, Stalin.

The Military Council established the criminal activities of a number of officials, as a result of which the Western Front suffered a heavy defeat. The military council decided:

1) Arrest the former chief of staff of the Klimovsky front, the former deputy commander of the Air Force of the Todorsky front and the chief of artillery of the Klich front.

2) Bring to court the commander of the 4th Army Korobkov, the commander of the 9th air division Chernykh, the commander of the 42nd rifle division Lazarenko, the commander of the tank corps Oborin.

We ask you to approve the arrest and trial of the listed persons.

3) We have arrested Grigoriev, Head of Front Communications, Dorofeev, Head of the Topographical Department of the Front, Kirsanov, Head of the Department of Staffing of the Front, Yurov, Combat Training Inspector of the Air Force Headquarters, and Sheinkin, Head of the Military Department.

4) The commander of the ABTU department, Berkovich, the commander of the 8th disciplinary battalion Dykman and his deputy Krol, the head of the Minsk district medical warehouse Belyavsky, the head of the district military veterinary laboratory Ovchinnikov, the commander of the division of the artillery regiment Sbirannik are brought to trial.

Timoshenko, Mekhlis, Ponomarenko.

On the same day, the answer was:

"Tymoshenko, Mekhlis, Ponomarenko.

The State Defense Committee approves your measures to arrest Klimovsky, Oborin, Todorsky and others and welcomes these measures as one

from

sure ways to improve the front. I. Stalin.

In 1942, on his orders, albeit unspoken, the chief

of the operational department of the headquarters of the Stalingrad Front, General I.N. Rukhle, suspected by the Supreme Commander of passing information to the enemy.

At the end of 1943 and in 1944, when the war was approaching its victorious end, on the basis of Stalin's decisions, enshrined in relevant decrees, hundreds of thousands of Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Karachays, Crimean Tatars, Kalmyks, Meskhetian Turks were evicted from their homes. The total number of evicted Muslims was about 3 million people, of which almost a million were children, women, the elderly and the sick

died during the migration.

Seeing the hand of the enemy in all failures turned Stalin into a fixed idea. With unusual ease, he could manipulate the fate of people, including military leaders. The so-called "castling" of commanders of troops and armies was especially typical of the first year of the war. Ten fronts were replaced by General A.I. Eremenko, six - Marshal I.S. Konev. Constantly moved from one position to another, General I.E. Petrov. Marshal S.K. Timoshenko led the troops of the Western direction, then the South-Western direction, the troops of the Western, North-Western, Stalingrad fronts.

No less indicative in this regard is the career path of General M.S. Khozin. On October 27, 1941, he was appointed commander of the troops of the Leningrad Front, and on June 9, 1942, he was removed from this position. Soon Stalin appointed him commander of the 33rd Army, then deputy commander of the Western Front, commander of the 20th Army. In early March 1943, Khozin was promoted to the rank of colonel general, he was appointed commander of the Special Group of Forces, but

then

again became deputy commander of the troops of the Western Front. From this position, General M.S. Khozin was removed on December 8, 1943 and placed at the disposal of chief

**General Directorate of Personnel of NPOs.**

In total, during the years of the war, ten were replaced on the Western Front, in the 47th and 51st armies - fourteen, in the 9th - thirteen, in the 20th - twelve, in the 18th and 21st - eleven commanders.

The impression was created that the Supreme Commander-in-Chief saw in such a practice a positive phenomenon, contributing to the improvement of command and control of troops. "He treated people like chess pieces and mostly pawns," noted N.G. Kuznetsov. - He could remove any piece from the chessboard and put

her

again if the game required it. In such cases, he was not even vindictive ... Stalin turned into a despot ... Sometimes his rude treatment

of high military leaders during the war was justified by the situation and covered up by successes achieved at the end of the war. Confident in his rightness, he dealt even with his yesterday's comrades-in-arms.

The persistence of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief often resulted in stubbornness. There are many examples of this, especially in questions about the timing of the start of the offensive. "Stalin often

made decisions not according to understanding, but according to mood," said N.N. Voronov, talking about the episode of the dismissal of the head of the Main Artillery Directorate N.D. Yakovlev. "He had a strong will, which, under the influence of the environment (and possibly illness), sometimes turned into stubbornness," states N.G. Kuznetsov. - It is this, in my opinion, that played a negative role in the question of whether

on  
us Germany and when.

In this regard, the characteristic of I.V. Stalin made by Charles

de Gaulle in the third volume (it was not published in the USSR) of Military Memoirs. "He had great will. Tired of the life of a conspirator to disguise his thoughts and his soul, not to reckon with illusions, pity, sincerity, to see in every person an obstacle

or danger, everything with him was expressed by cunning, distrust and stubbornness. 7 This is an interesting sketch of a man whom the memoirist judges by first impression.

He describes de Gaulle and the solemn reception in the St. George's Hall of the Kremlin for the French delegation: "Stalin proclaimed toasts in honor of party and state leaders, generals and officials ... with pathos listed their merits and duties, combining praise with a threat. Addressing the chief of artillery, he said: "Voronov, to your health! Your task is to deploy on the battlefields

all  
our caliber system. Thanks to it, the enemy is suppressed along the front and in depth. Press more boldly with your weapons!" To Novikov, the head of the Air Force, he said: "Our planes are you who use them. If you are badly managed, then you should know what awaits you!" Calling the chief of logistics, he sternly warned: "His duty is to deliver goods and people to the front. He needs to do everything right, otherwise he will be hanged like

This  
practiced in our country!"

De Gaulle exaggerated the colors, but the atmosphere of the reception was conveyed quite truthfully.

His certain isolation from reality was emphasized by many of those around him, in particular, G.K. Zhukov, A.M. Vasilevsky, N.N. Voronov, I. V. Tyulenev. Quite often, Stalin, fired up with some idea, demanded its immediate implementation, not imagining the time spent on organizing certain actions of the troops, mastering new types of equipment or weapons. The Supreme Commander, for example, was at first simply disarmed by B.M. Shaposhnikov about the need for a lot of work, as he put it, "long and routine",

By  
the development of an operation plan and the preparation of troops for its implementation. This was most likely explained by the fact that Stalin did not have a clear idea about the practical side of the activities of the troops, as well as the megalomania of the leader.

It would be worth emphasizing that in a number of cases his ideas about the organization and conduct of hostilities were based on memories of the Civil War. Evidence of this is his increased interest in the cavalry in the autumn of 1941 and the spring of 1942, his tendency to create commissions to identify the state of affairs at the front (in the autumn of 1941, in the winter of 1943/44), excessive faith, especially at the beginning of the war, due to organizational, volitional activity to the detriment of the creative, organizing side of the matter,

sometimes a passion for solving small tactical problems.

It seems that the manifestation of certain negative character traits of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief largely depended on the behavior of the people around him. Cases are well known when the hard line occupied, for example, by G.K. Zhukov, led to a change in the situation in which certain issues were discussed and decisions were made. Quite often, a firm, correct position in behavior was taken by A.M. Vasilevsky, S.K. Timoshenko, B.M. Shaposhnikov, other military leaders, which contributed to the creation of an atmosphere of efficiency and prudence. On the part of many military and political leaders, traits of servility, flattery, oiling, encouraging despotism, irritability, and rudeness were manifested in Stalin's behavior.

"During the war years I met quite a few big bosses who were afraid of Stalin," wrote Aleksey Sergeevich Zheltov, who then held the position of a member of the Military Council of the Karelian, Don, Southwestern, and 3rd Ukrainian fronts. there the question of improving the care of political agencies for the personnel of units and subunits at the front was discussed, I was struck by the behavior of L.3. Mehlis.

He reported to Stalin, Molotov, Mikoyan, Shcherbakov about the shortcomings discovered in

7 Svanez 4th SbaiPe. Metoies 4e opegte. Gezap 1944-1946. P]op, 1965. R. 60-61.

this plan. From excitement he dropped his pince-nez, one glass was broken, his hands were trembling. I didn't understand then why he was

so frightened, how one could be so disgraced in front of Stalin, lose self-control: why should a communist be afraid if he openly admits mistakes and explains how he will eliminate them. I was ashamed of Mehlis. Only years later I realized that then we were young, we didn't experience tremors in the knees, and Mekhlis knew the leader better than us,

remembered

arrests, executions, in which he himself participated.

Thus, Joseph Vissarionovich, as it were, lived in himself, not completely trusting the secrets of his soul and his thoughts to anyone. Loneliness was his most habitual state.

He read a lot - in the pre-war years he managed to look through five or six books a day, up to 400-500 pages. "He knew the ancient world and mythology exceptionally well," noted V.M. Molotov. - He worked hard on himself. I wrote everything myself." He also liked to watch documentaries and feature films.

"I.V. Stalin, - recalled S.M. Shtemenko, - except for festive concerts and performances, which were usually arranged after solemn meetings, he did not go anywhere. His home "theatre" was music radio broadcasts and listening to records. Most of the new records

that were delivered to him, he pre-played himself and immediately evaluated them. Handwritten inscriptions appeared on each plate: "good", "demolition", "bad", "rubbish". In the nightstand of the automatic player donated by I.V. To Stalin by the Americans, only the plates with the first two inscriptions were left. The rest was removed. In addition to the player, there was a domestic-made gramophone

With

manual winding. The owner himself carried it where necessary.

We also knew his love for small towns. For the game of towns, they were divided into parties of 4-5 people in each, of course, from among those who wished. Rest

noisily hurt. Played, as a rule, 10 pieces. We started with the gun. They teased the losers, sometimes in mischievous terms, which Stalin did not miss. He himself played unimportantly, but with passion. After each hit, he was very pleased and would certainly say: "That's how we are to them!" And when he missed, he began to look in his pockets for matches and kindle a pipe or suck hard on it.

At the dacha there was neither a park, nor a garden, nor "cultural" trimmed bushes or trees. I.V. Stalin loved natural nature, untouched by the hand of man. Coniferous and deciduous forest grew wildly around the house -

everywhere dense, not knowing the ax.

Not far from the house stood several hollow trunks without branches, in which nests were made for birds and squirrels. It was a real bird kingdom. In front of the hollow town there are feeding tables. Stalin came here almost daily and fed the feathered pets."

The same Shtemenko also notes other habits of Stalin.

"In the dacha kitchen," he wrote, "in addition to the usual stove, where simple, healthy meals were prepared, there was a special oven. And - most remarkable - behind a wooden partition there was a large Russian oven in which bread was baked.

In addition, according to the stories of people who worked here, when radiculitis bothered him very much, Stalin would come here, undress, lay a wide board on the hot bricks and, groaning, climb on it to "treat".

... Stalin used to relax on the veranda on winter days. He was lying there in felt boots, a fur hat with earflaps, tightly wrapped in a wide sheepskin coat ...

... The end of August 1944 was extremely serene. I.V. Stalin, tired of the incredible stress of military everyday life, preferred to work in the country. There we presented reports on the situation and documents for signature. Members of the government also often gathered there.

The owner of the dacha in the short moments of rest was very friendly and liked to show the dacha to those present. Once I.V. Stalin, pointing to a small hillock free of trees, said that watermelons would grow here after the war. Antonov and I looked at each other: they say, Kuntsevo is not the Kuban ... But soon after the war, we

Reminds me of watermelon. After the air parade in Tushino, which finally took place after repeated transfers due to bad weather, I.V. Stalin invited members of the Politburo

And

the leadership of the War Ministry (then it was called that) to their place for lunch. The tables were set at the Near Dacha in the

birch alley. The weather was excellent, the mood all

excellent. After dinner, JV Stalin led us to a small hill, on which, indeed, several dozen watermelons grew! Stalin leisurely chose a rather large watermelon, carried it to the table and deftly cut it in half with one movement of a long knife. Watermelon

turned out to be

wonderfully red and quite sweet. It only remained to wonder how such watermelons could ripen in the open ground in the conditions of the Moscow region ...

Stalin liked to arrange friendly dinners, where various issues were discussed in a relaxed atmosphere. Many of their members wrote about them,  
V

including G.K. Zhukov, A.M. Vasilevsky, I.S. Konev, A.S. Yakovlev, I.Kh. Bagramyan. The atmosphere of one of them - the meeting of the New, 1945 is conveyed by S.M. Shtemenko:

"At Stalin's dacha, we (I and General Antonov) found several more military men - A.A. Novikova, N.N. Voronova, Ya.N. Fedorenko, A.V. Khruleva. Then S.M. drove up. Budyonny ... a few minutes before twelve, the members of the Politburo arrived together and with them some people's commissars. I remember only B.L. Vannikova and V.A. Malyshev. In all, there were about twenty-five men and a single woman, the wife of the General Secretary of the Italian Communist Party, Palmiro Togliatti, who was also present.

Stalin took his usual place at the end of the table. On the right hand, as always, stood a decanter of clean water. There were no waiters, and everyone took what he wanted on his plate. With a stroke of the clock, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief delivered a short word in

honor of the Soviet people, who had done everything possible to defeat the Nazi army and brought closer the hour of our victory. He proclaimed a toast in honor of the Soviet Armed Forces and congratulated us all:

- Happy New Year, comrades!

We mutually congratulated each other and drank to the victorious end of the war in the coming 1945. Some stiffness, felt at first, soon disappeared.

The conversation became general. The host did not follow a strict ritual: after several toasts, he got up from the table, lit a pipe and entered into a conversation with one of the guests. The rest did not fail to take advantage of their freedom, divided into groups, laughter was heard,

voices

become

loud.

CM. Budyonny brought in the button accordion he had brought with him from the hallway, sat down on a hard chair and stretched out the furs. He played masterfully. Mostly Russian folk songs, waltzes and polkas. Like any true bayan player, he leaned his ear to the instrument. It was noticeable that  
This

his favorite pastime.

K.E. sat down next to Semyon Mikhailovich. Voroshilov. Then many others came along.

When Budyonny was tired of playing, Stalin turned on the gramophone. I chose the plates myself. The guests tried to dance, but the lady was alone, and nothing happened with the dancing. Then  
master

At home, he took out "Lady" from a stack of records. CM. Budyonny did not sit still - he started dancing.

He danced dashingly, squatting, clapping his hands on his knees and the tops of his boots.

All

heartily applauded him ... "

What is the general assessment of I.V. Stalin as Supreme Commander-in-Chief during World War II?

"Undoubtedly, he was a worthy Supreme Commander," concludes G.K. Zhukov. "I suppose," noted A.M. Vasilevsky, "that Stalin can undoubtedly be classified as an outstanding commander." "One thing is certain," emphasized N.G. Kuznetsov, one cannot deny the great achievements that the country has achieved under his leadership, belittle the outstanding role of I.V. Stalin during the Great Patriotic War. His complex nature cannot be portrayed one-sidedly. It is wrong to say that he

was an ignoramus and commanded troops around the globe, but one cannot fail to mention his mistakes in the military

deed." "During the Great Patriotic War, the military authority of Stalin in the eyes of the commanders of the fronts and armies was high," I.S. Konev. "In the victory, great merit and a role belonged to him as the Supreme Commander."

Noteworthy is the assessment of the personality of I.V. Stalin, which is given by D.A. Volkogonov. "Stalin never possessed outstanding prognostic abilities,

—  
he writes. - Yes, this is impossible with a dogmatic mindset ... Something changed in Stalin over the years, but the dictatorial, Caesarist essence only strengthened and improved ... I think that Stalin is not a commander in the full sense of the word. He was a political leader: tough, strong-willed, purposeful, power-hungry, who, due to historical circumstances, was forced to engage in military affairs. Stalin's strength as Supreme Commander-in-Chief was predetermined by his absolute power... Stalin had, so to speak, a more universal way of thinking, organically connected with a wide range of non-military knowledge. This advantage was determined by the position of Stalin as a state, political, party leader.

Of course, in the activities of I.V. Stalin in the post of Supreme Commander-in-Chief had a lot of negative things. He made a number of miscalculations in assessing the military-political situation, the plans of the enemy and the possible nature of his actions. They became, along with other factors, the result of major failures of the Soviet troops in the initial period of the Great Patriotic War, which befell their catastrophes in the fall of 1941 and in the spring of 1942. Significant mistakes were made in planning the spring-summer campaign of 1942. There were miscalculations in assessing the situation in certain strategic directions in February 1943 and in the winter of 1943/44.

At the same time, Stalin managed to mobilize the country's resources to repulse the enemy. As a result, under his leadership, through the efforts of the Soviet people, a radical turning point in the war was achieved. Then came the long-awaited victory in the fight against a strong and experienced enemy. It was the result of the heroic actions of the troops on the battlefield, selfless labor in the rear of the country, a widespread partisan and underground movement, and the success of Soviet diplomacy. The symbol of this victory was the name of Stalin as a political, state and military leader. There is no doubt that I.V. Stalin was not a god endowed with superhuman qualities. But

he was a man who had unlimited power during the Great Patriotic War, striving to make the most of the opportunities inherent in the people of our Fatherland.

The military and political activities of the Fuhrer

There are many authoritative people in the world who claim that both I. V. Stalin and A. Hitler possessed military leadership abilities. JV Stalin assumed the duties of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief on August 8, 1941. Stalin was awarded the title of Marshal of the Soviet Union, and then - Generalissimo of the Soviet Union, he was awarded two orders of "Victory" in the same way as G.K. Zhukov and A.M. Vasilevsky.

A. Hitler took command of the ground forces of Germany after the resignation of Field Marshal W. von Brauchitsch in December 1941, after the German offensive near Moscow "choked". The great military-strategic abilities of A. Hitler were spoken by the minister of his government Blomberg, Field Marshals Jodl,

IN.

Keitel and G. von Kluge, Grand Admiral K. Doenitz and others.

But you need to understand that the commander is a military leader who makes decisions on the use of large masses of troops in an operation and implements them. In this regard, of course, neither JV Stalin nor A. Hitler can be considered a commander. Their activities proceeded on a different, higher level, and the war became only a part of this activity. To wage war, on their orders, the generals exercised control over the troops, putting into practice the political plans of the leaders of the state, and the general staffs

developed plans for specific operations.

At the same time, one cannot fail to recognize that the role of the head of a belligerent state in making strategic decisions is enormous. He approves the general plan of the war and the plans for each of the campaigns and major operations, and then carefully monitors their implementation. He

contributes

amendments not only to plans, but also to the course of operations, which requires serious knowledge

military

affairs. With his participation, military leaders are appointed to key posts and they are replaced. This is a huge amount of military work of the highest level, which only a strategist in the full sense of the word can do.

Therefore, denying that I.V. Stalin and A. Hitler had the art of generalship in its classical sense, we cannot but agree that the work they carried out significantly influenced the strategy and operational art, which is the main criterion

in evaluating the activities of each commander. Both of them worked as high-level politicians, but their work was often very specific and directly influenced the actions of commanders, headquarters and troops. And this means only one thing - we need to talk not about the military activities of I.V. Stalin and A. Hitler, but about their military activities and the style of their strategic management of the armed forces during the Great Patriotic War.

The image of the "possessed Fuhrer" who, due to his vices, lost the war, was firmly rooted in Soviet literature. This is completely untrue. A. Hitler was an intelligent person and a competent leader who could calculate the situation many steps ahead and subordinate it to the achievement of his goals.



An important component of the military-political activity of any head of state is the selection of allies and the establishment of appropriate relations with them. A. Hitler was constantly engaged in this work.

Initially, the process of creating a military alliance of states led by Germany was successful. Until mid-June 1941, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, as well as puppet state formations - Slovakia and Croatia, joined the military alliance (Three Powers Pact) concluded on September 27, 1940 between Germany, Italy and Japan.

Negotiations were actively conducted with Spain and Finland.

A. Hitler's attitude towards the allies was not unambiguous. Hitler and his generals were so confident in their abilities that they initially intended to destroy the USSR without resorting to the help of their main allies - Italy

and Japan. According to the war plan against the USSR, codenamed "Barbarossa", only Romania and Finland

were allowed to participate in the war in the east, while the rest of the "allies" were not dedicated to this plan. And the attitude towards Romania and Finland was not very positive. Hitler believed that the Romanian troops could not conduct offensive operations, and the Finnish, although brave, were too small and had not yet recovered from the defeat in the Soviet-Finnish war.

After the German troops began their successful advance deep into Soviet territory on June 22, 1941, Germany's allies hurried to send their troops to on

Eastern front, to snatch a fatter piece from a future victory. In the summer of 1941, Finland and Romania put up two armies against the USSR, Italy, Hungary and Slovakia

one army corps. Bulgaria, under public pressure, on August 25, 1941, decided not to send its troops to the Eastern Front, limiting itself to actions on

other directions and economic assistance from Germany. But it soon became clear that the plans of many of Germany's allies did not justify themselves.

Italy became Germany's main ally in World War II. Its industry worked for the war. The Italian military industry reached the highest levels in the production of weapons and military equipment in 1941. At that time, 5.7 thousand artillery pieces, 4.2 thousand mortars, 780 tanks,

almost

2.5 thousand combat aircraft, 24 warships of the main class. But the very next year, Italy's military production began to decline. In 1942 compared to 1941

less artillery pieces were produced by 506 units, mortars - by 200, tanks - by 113, combat aircraft - by 118, warships - by 6 units.

Since July 1942, there has been a deterioration in German-Italian relations. On November 5, B. Mussolini first told the German ambassador in Rome that, in his opinion, it was necessary to conclude

peace with the USSR. And at the beginning of the counteroffensive of the Soviet troops near Stalingrad, the 8th Italian, 3rd and 4th Romanian armies were defeated.

In July 1943, after the victory of the Soviet troops at Kursk, the Anglo-American troops made a successful landing on the island of Sicily, from where the landing in southern Italy was launched. Under the threat of the defeat of Italy by the Allies on July 25, 1943 Mussolini

was removed from power, and on September 3, the new Italian government of P. Badoglio signed the "Brief Armistice Terms" with the United States and Great Britain.

A. Hitler regarded the events in Italy as a betrayal. On September 28, German troops began the occupation of Italy and reached Naples. In the northern part of the country occupied by them, the so-called Republic of Salò was created,

headed by Mussolini, but in reality the power belonged to the German administration.

One of the first to feel the unpredictability of the results of the "Eastern campaign" of the Wehrmacht was the Hungarian dictator M. Horthy. September 7, 1942 he arrived

at

the headquarters of A. Hitler near Vinnitsa and demanded the withdrawal from the front of the Hungarian corps, which suffered heavy losses. In early November, the German command was forced to meet these demands.

Subsequently, the Hungarian government began to look for an opportunity to get out of the war with the help of the United States. A. Hitler, having learned about this, ordered on March 19, 1944 to send troops

to

Hungary and establish an occupation regime there. The Hungarians got scared and soon put on

Eastern Front an entire army (12 divisions and 2 brigades), and in August-September two more armies (19 divisions and 2 brigades).

On September 23, 1944, Soviet troops launched an offensive deep into Hungary. On the territory liberated by them, by the end of the year, the Provisional National Government of Hungary was formed, which on December 28 declared war on Germany, and on January 20, 1945 signed an armistice agreement with the USSR, the USA and Great Britain. But there

were still heavy battles ahead in the Lake Balaton area and the assault on Budapest.

Romania was part of the countries of the Nazi bloc for a long time. But the defeat of the Romanian troops in the region of Iasi and Chisinau put the Antonescu regime on the verge of collapse. On August 23, 1944, an uprising broke out in Bucharest, a new government came to power, which already on August 24 declared war on Germany. On September 12, the Romanians signed an armistice agreement with the USSR, the USA and Great Britain.

In the summer of 1944, the anti-fascist movement in Bulgaria intensified sharply. The day after the Soviet troops crossed the Romanian-Bulgarian border and

the defeat of Bulgaria became obvious, the whole country was seized by anti-government insurrection.

A new government came to power, which immediately declared war on Germany, and on October 28 signed an armistice agreement with the USSR, the USA and Great Britain.

Could not stand the allied treaty with Germany and Finland. On February 3, 1943, at a meeting of Marshal G. Mannerheim with President K. Ryti and some other members of the Finnish government, it was decided to seek Finland's withdrawal from the war with the USSR. At the same time, the stake was placed on the United States, with which Finland maintained diplomatic relations. A. Hitler, having learned about this, demanded that the leaders of Finland give an obligation that they would not look for an opportunity to make peace with the USSR, but

they avoided it. Nevertheless, in May 1944, Finland kept 19 divisions at the front against the USSR.

On July 10, 1944, Soviet troops launched a powerful offensive against the Finnish defenses on the Karelian Isthmus, which ended with the liberation of almost the entire

Karelia. In the face of inevitable defeat, the Finnish government entered into negotiations with the USSR. On September 12, 1944, an armistice agreement was signed

Finland with the USSR, USA and Great Britain.

Before the start of the aggression against the USSR, A. Hitler counted on a military alliance with Spain, but Franco did not succumb to persuasion. True, on June 22, 1941, the Spanish Foreign Minister told his Berlin colleague that his country "expresses the greatest satisfaction in connection with the beginning of the struggle against Bolshevik Russia." But the matter did not go further than this at the official level. A large group of Spanish volunteers was sent to the Soviet-German front, from which the so-called "blue" division was formed. On October 14, 1941, this division appeared in the Novgorod region, and on October 16 it participated in the battles in the Volkhov-Tikhvin direction. But the promised decision on Spain's entry into the war against the USSR or England did not follow.

The "Blue" division, transformed into the 250th Infantry Division of the Reichswehr, constantly suffered heavy losses. In the battles near Krasny Bor on February 10, 1943, about half of this division was destroyed by Soviet troops. By that time, diplomatic relations between Spain and Germany had also seriously deteriorated. On October 10, 1943, Franco officially announced Spain's decision to remain neutral in World War II, and two days later an order was signed to withdraw the "blue" division from the Soviet-German front. True, on Soviet territory and after that

remained

Spanish legion of 2.5 thousand people.

In solving the problems of the Second World War, A. Hitler placed a huge stake on a military alliance with Japan. Negotiations on a military alliance between Germany and Japan were actively conducted in 1940.

And

1941. At the same time, the question of Japan's entry into the war with the USSR, it would seem, should be decided positively in the near future. On June 28, 1941, Ribbentrop telegraphed the German ambassador in Tokyo, General O. Ott: "Since Russia is in a state of near collapse ... it is simply unacceptable that Japan does not try to solve the problem of Vladivostok and the Siberian region as soon as military preparations are completed. I ask you to use all available means to press for Japan's entry

V

war against Russia as soon as possible ... The sooner she enters the war, the better. Our natural desire is to meet with Japanese representatives on the Trans-Siberian Railway before the start of winter."

But Hitler miscalculated in his political game with Japan, from whose government, by the way, he even hid the work on the Barbarossa plan. Japanese diplomacy turned out

more cautious and flexible than the Fuhrer expected. As early as April 13, 1941, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, on his way from Germany, stopped in Moscow, where he signed the pact

O

neutrality. Japan strictly observed this pact, despite all the efforts of the German side to achieve its violation.

True, on December 7, 1941, Japanese bombers suddenly attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor. This attack was a big surprise not only for Washington, but also for Berlin. At the same time, this was part of Hitler's plan to weaken the United States, an ally of England. But for the Soviet Union, when German tanks stood near Moscow itself, the military conflict between Japan and the United States was beneficial, as the threat of opening a second front was reduced.

on  
Far East.

Thus, the work of A. Hitler and his diplomacy on the choice of allies and the creation of a military bloc of states directed against the USSR, the USA and Great Britain, as a result, failed. All those who hastened to join Berlin during the victories of the Nazi army gradually withdrew from this bloc with the beginning of their defeats. The

capitulation of Romania and Bulgaria, which immediately declared war on Germany and reinforced the troops of the 3rd and 4th Ukrainian fronts, became an outright betrayal. Hungary held out longer than others, but its armed forces could no longer save the situation.

When choosing the time for the start of aggression against the USSR, A. Hitler showed a certain insight. Various factors were taken into account, including economic and

human.

The economic factor was that the strike was scheduled for the end of June - the time when the spring agricultural work was completed, but the crop was not yet ripe and not ready for harvest. A ripening crop is difficult for troops to destroy during a retreat, and it is difficult for peasants to part with it for any reason.

Consequently, in the event of military failures in deciding the fate of the harvest, a conflict should have arisen

between the Soviet troops and the peasant population of the theater of military operations. AND

such

conflicts have taken place. At the same time, the Fuhrer had no doubt that if the offensive was successful, the German

troops would get the entire crop in the occupied territory of the Soviet Union.

"I demand only one thing - that the German soldier always be fed, and his family every month feel an increase in their budget from revenues from the east," he said.

- AND

I care little about how this will be done and what will be left for the Russian peasant after that. By the winter of 1941, we must have so many things that we will stop thinking about the necessary for a long time. How the Russians

will survive this winter is their problem. Inferior nations are accustomed to hunger and cold, and we are not obliged to re-educate them.

From the diary of the Chief of the General Staff of the German Land Forces, General F. Halder, we see that during the daily reports to the Fuhrer on the situation on the fronts, Hitler was constantly interested in the quantity and quality of trophies. He sincerely rejoiced when he learned about the capture of new warehouses with

ammunition, fuel, military equipment, food. Once he confessed in a private conversation:

- Before the war, we deliberately agreed with the Russians to conclude a long-term agreement for the supply of petroleum products to Germany. I knew that the clumsy Russians, afraid of disrupting supplies, would begin to build up huge reserves in the western regions of the country, which would even exceed the volumes of our agreement. But we methodically hinted that we were ready to conclude new, more comprehensive agreements in the near future. The Russians continued to accumulate stocks, which are now captured by us and used for the needs of the Reich. And this picture is not only in relation to fuel ...

After the war, documents (maps, calculations, graphs) were found in the archives of the Reich, captured by Soviet troops, in which German specialists, on a special assignment from Hitler, calculated the probable list and volume of trophies that German

troops will be able to capture on Soviet territory in the first weeks of the war. These documents could shake the mind of any sane person. On the basis of undercover sources in the western regions included in the USSR after September 1939, everything was calculated, up to the approximate number of poultry that the peasants bred in their yards. Based on this, it was concluded that after the onset of the offensive, the need for troops in fuel and products can be reduced by 40%,

V  
vehicles - by 20%, in medicines - by 15%.

When calculating the pace of the advance of German troops on Soviet territory and the number of trophies, the Nazi leadership always tried to take into account the human factor.

German intelligence in the 30s constantly monitored the state of the Red Army, especially its leadership. So, according to available information, in 1932, German intelligence believed that the strength of the Red Army by that time "has risen to such an extent that it is able to wage a defensive war against any enemy ... With its numerical superiority, the Red Army is able to wage a victorious offensive war against their immediate neighbors in the West (Poland, Romania)...". But at the same time, it was also noted that the Red Army "... still suffers from the fact that, starting

from  
platoon commander and ending with the regiment commander, the commander is not yet full-fledged. In their mass, they are only capable of solving the tasks of a non-commissioned officer. Despite all the measures, the problem of the Red Army has not yet been resolved.

The repressions of 1937-1939 caused great damage to the international prestige of the USSR

in the eyes of his allies. So, the Czechoslovak side, from which the documents were received  
By

the accusation of Marshal of the Soviet Union M. N. Tukhachevsky, already in the second half of 1937 expressed great concern about the weakening of the Red Army. On this occasion, there was a major clash at a conference of representatives of the Czechoslovak and Soviet military intelligence, held in Prague in December 1937. Soon after

this  
the Czechoslovak general staff became so cold towards an alliance with the USSR that it refused to create a commission to coordinate the defense plans of both states, fearing that  
these  
plans, given the presence in the USSR of such a number of spies among the top military leaders, will immediately become known to the enemy.

The Tukhachevsky case brought deep anxiety into French politics and led to a severe crisis in relations between France and the USSR.

Negative views in relation to repression in the USSR were held by official London. In early May 1938, the British Foreign Minister Halifax tried to convince the Czechoslovak envoy in London, Jan Masaryk, that

the purges have reduced the combat effectiveness of the Red Army to such an extent that Moscow's significant contribution to a future war with  
Germany becomes very problematic. The same opinion was held in Washington.

Information about the disclosure of a military conspiracy and repression against representatives

the highest command staff of the Red Army greatly worried the French government and brought

To

freeze Franco-Soviet relations. Already two days after the execution of Tukhachevsky and his comrades, the French Ambassador Kulondor visited the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR M.M. Litvinov in order to explain to him the "deplorable impression" that arose in

countries friendly to the USSR, as a result of the trial and the brutal reprisal. Of course, the fate of Tukhachevsky and others was the least of the French's concerns. He was worried about another question: how should the accusations of espionage brought against the generals be regarded? Maxim Maksimovich could not answer anything concrete, except for the conclusion that the liquidation of the Germanophile group in the leadership of the Red Army should benefit Franco-Soviet relations.

The French diplomat did not let up. Two weeks later, he asks the First Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR V.P. Potemkin: "To what extent the executed

officers involved in a conspiracy with Germany? Potemkin only replied that Tukhachevsky

And

his accomplices wanted to stage a coup d'état and ally with Germany. The French government, impressed by the events that took place in the USSR, decided to conduct military contacts with the Soviet Union as carefully as possible. Already on the autumn maneuvers of the French troops, held in 1937,

Soviet

the delegation was not invited.

The reaction of Western countries towards the USSR immediately became known to Germany. The German ambassador in Moscow, Count Schulenburg, repeatedly noted this in his letters. On April 14, 1938, the German ambassador in Paris, Breuer, wrote to the German Foreign Minister in Berlin: "During the last year ... (appeared. - Auth.) Big doubts about the strength of the Soviet regime, the power of the Red Army and the goodwill of the Soviet government. The execution of the generals, who in the French general staff were considered highly qualified

officers ... showed the dubiousness of the regime, prominent figures of which, according to its own statements, had been engaged in sabotage and betrayal for many years.

The repressions caused great harm to the management system of the Red Army in the person of military leaders and top-level commanders. So, at a meeting of the Main Military Council, which took place from November 21 to November 27, 1937, commander N.V. Kuibyshev (brother of V. V.

Kuibyshev) said: "Today, captains command three divisions. But the point is not the rank, but the point is that, say, the Armenian division is commanded by a captain, who before that did not command not only a regiment, but also a battalion, he commanded only a battery.

We have a

major in the Azerbaijan division. Until now he has not

commanded neither a regiment nor a battalion, and in recent years was a school teacher. Where can the commander of the Georgian division

Dzhabakhidze be good, who had previously commanded a company for two years and had no more command experience

It has".

In 1937-1939, the repressed were replaced by young military leaders who did not

who had the proper experience in managing large military formations. This became evident during the years of military conflicts of the late 30s and during the Great Patriotic War. Thus, on the eve of the Great Patriotic War, a new personnel corps of the high command of the Red Army began to form. The main point of this process was the resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of January 14, 1941 "On the Chief of the General Staff and Commanders of the Military Districts." In accordance with this decree, General of the Army G.K. was appointed Chief of the General Staff and Deputy Commissar of Defense. Zhukov, commander of the troops of the Kyiv Special

military

district - Lieutenant General M.P. Kirponos, commander of the troops of the Leningrad Military District - Lieutenant General M. Popov, commander of the troops of the 1st Army - Lieutenant General A.I. Eremenko. There were other appointments as well.

Describing the command staff of the Soviet Armed Forces by the spring of 1941, it should perhaps be noted that the percentage of staffing by them in the army was 86%, the fleet - 100%. Among the highest commanding staff, 57.6% had an age of up to 45 years, 91% had

service experience of up to 20 years. The negative point was that at least 75% of military leaders and commanders were in their positions for less than one year. This gave reason to the chief of the general staff of the ground forces of the Wehrmacht, F. Halder, in May 1941, to conclude that "the Russian higher officer corps is now very bad, it makes a worse impression than in 1933."

This was understood by some Soviet military leaders. So, N. N. Voronov at the Main Military Council, dedicated to the personnel policy of 1937-1938, said: "A situation has arisen in the army (after 1937 - Auth.), That the commanders somehow do not feel confident in their actions, any subordinate can at any moment raise a fuss about any of his activities along the party line, along the line of special bodies, go complain to the political instructor or commissar, and the commander can never guarantee that

the investigation of his case will not begin immediately. Many "dodgers" skillfully use these detours, talk and act a lot, are active, but in fact zero".

In the period 1937-1940, all the commanders of the military districts were replaced, 90% were replaced by their deputies (chiefs of staff), assistant chiefs of staff, heads of military branches and services, 80% - the leadership of corps and divisional directorates, 90% commanders and regimental chiefs of staff. The repressed were replaced by new people: in 1938 alone, 39,000 people were promoted to higher positions.

Up to the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, there was a frequent turnover of commanders, mainly of the senior management level. So, only within two days on March 7 and 8, 1941, four army commanders, 42 corps commanders, 117 division commanders were promoted to new positions.

Due to the lack of a personnel reserve, persons who did not have the necessary training and experience were often appointed to key management positions. Thus, the commander of the Air Force of the Belarusian Special Military District was appointed squadron commander Major K.M. Gusev, the commander of the mechanized corps was the commander of the training battalion, Major M.P. Petrov, the commander of one of the rifle divisions - the former commander of the battalion, Captain F.N. Mytkin.

Thus, in terms of the quality of the human factor at the command level

Armed Forces professionally, the Soviet Union was seriously losing to Germany. This was especially felt on the eve of the Great Patriotic War, when the need for personnel increased greatly due to technical re-equipment,

organizational improvement and strategic deployment of the army and navy. In 1940 alone, seven new military districts and armies were formed in the USSR,  
six

rifle corps, 22 rifle divisions, 120 brigades and regiments. Thousands of generals and officers with the necessary knowledge and experience in commanding troops were required to complete the command and staff personnel of these formations and formations. But it was not possible to prepare the necessary number of specialists of such a high level in a short time, and A. Hitler knew this well, when he planned the beginning of the aggression for June 1941.

An important component of the military activities of A. Hitler was the occupation policy of Germany. From the end of June 1941 to December 1942, Germany, with the assistance of its allies, captured 1.9 million square meters. km of Soviet territory, where 88 million people lived before the war, of which about 75 million remained under occupation. It is known that A. Hitler, starting a war against the USSR, planned the destruction of a significant part of the Soviet people and the complete enslavement of another, as well as the export of valuables from the USSR to Germany. Were

hundreds of cities were destroyed, thousands of villages were burned, millions of civilians were shot. The forcible removal of Soviet people, mostly young people, to work in Germany was organized. In total, 5.27 million Soviet citizens were deported during the war years, of which only half returned home after the war.

The atrocities of the Nazis aroused the resistance of the Soviet people, which Moscow very soon took control of, turning it into a partisan movement. Already June 29 and July 18

In 1941, the documents of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks on the organization of the struggle behind enemy lines were published. Hundreds of partisan detachments and thousands of underground groups were created. In fact, another front of the struggle was deployed behind enemy lines, which used non-standard partisan methods of countering the enemy: attacks on communications and rear facilities, sabotage, terrorist acts. It was also important that the power of the German administration in the partisan areas was practically not recognized, and it was necessary to constantly disrupt troops from the front to fight the partisans.

The activities of the Soviet partisans in the rear of the German troops were very productive. So, the commander of Army Group Center, Field Marshal von Bock, believed that thanks to them, the German offensive on Moscow in the autumn of 1941 was thwarted. In his diary, in particular, he wrote: "The Russians, having destroyed almost all the structures on the main highways and roads, managed to so skillfully increase our transport difficulties that the front lacked the most necessary for existence and fighting. Ammunition, fuel, food and winter uniforms do not arrive due to a catastrophic

states

railway transport and the length of communications (up to 1500 km), motor transport is faced with impossible requirements. Its effectiveness drops. It turns out that today we have no room for significant maneuver." (World wars of the twentieth century. Book 3. S. 430.)



With the formation of the Central and front headquarters of the partisan movement, the sabotage activities of the partisans were continuously increased, and above all in those areas that were of particular interest to the Soviet command at the moment. On July 27, 1942, the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement approved the

"Operational Plan for a Massed Attack on Enemy Communications and Enemy Communication Centers", which for the first time closely linked the sabotage activities of partisans with the actions of the fronts. Subsequently, such interaction became commonplace.

To fight the Soviet partisans, German troops were forced to carry out punitive operations. On August 18, 1942, A. Hitler signed the directive "Basic instructions for intensifying the fight against the partisan movement in the East." To suppress the partisan movement, since the summer of 1942, the German command constantly kept 15-16 divisions in its rear. In addition, 7-8 divisions, reconnaissance and bomber aircraft were additionally involved in specific operations against partisans.

Part of the fight against Soviet partisans, A. Hitler proposed to assign to units formed by their former Soviet prisoners of war, and local police units. The first "volunteer" formations appeared already in July-August 1941 on the occupied territory of the Baltic republics. Since the spring of 1942, when the Nazis felt a shortage of troops, they began to create eastern units throughout the occupied Soviet territory. The formation of these parts was quite successful. In December 1942, the Army Group "Center" had more than 90 units and subunits of "volunteers", in which there were 30.4 thousand people. In addition, from the beginning of 1943, the German command began to create the Russian Volunteer Army (ROA), headed by the former Soviet General A.A. Vlasov.

But this work was not crowned with success. From the second half of 1943, the mass transition of soldiers of "volunteer" formations to the side of the partisans began. Total, by

according to the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement, for the period from July 15, 1942 to 15

February 1944, 8887 people went over to the side of the partisans.

Thus, the deployment of the Soviet partisan movement brought enormous material and moral damage to the enemy, and the fight against him was not crowned with success. According to reports, the partisans derailed more than 20,000 military echelons, blew up 2,000 railway and over 9,500 highway bridges, destroyed more than 65,000 vehicles, 4,500 tanks, 1,100 aircraft, 2,900 enemy depots.

A special page in the war of Germany against the USSR was the managerial activity of A. Hitler. Contemporaries note that almost from the very beginning, the Fuhrer began

actively

to interfere in the development of military plans, controlled the activities of the General Staff of the German Land Forces

and the main headquarters of other branches of the armed forces. From the generals, he demanded constant detailed

reports on the situation on the fronts and the decisions made, but often made his own decisions. Later, many wrote that these decisions were often based on emotions, and not deep knowledge of the strategy.

In fact, this was not the case. Before voicing each of his decisions, Hitler consulted experts for a long time, patiently listened to various opinions,

arguments, doubts. Thanks to his exceptional memory, he memorized numbers, compared them, and made simple calculations. He was interested in the material side of each operation, the ability to carry it out with the available funds, the ability of other ministries and departments to provide additional forces. And only after he was convinced of the correctness of the calculations, he proceeded to the operational side of the matter and loudly announced his decision, which in fact was the fruit of the work of a large team.

After the assassination attempt on Hitler on July 20, 1944, personnel changes took place in the Wehrmacht. General Guderian the day after the explosion was appointed chief of the general staff of the German ground forces. After that, he took up the publication of orders, in which he assured the Fuhrer of the loyalty of the officer corps to him.

A statement condemning the putsch was made in the press by Field Marshal von Brauchitsch. In Rastenburg, with assurances of loyalty to the Fuhrer, other high ranks

Reich. By order of the army of July 24, 1944, instead of the traditional army salute in the army, the Nazi salute was introduced "as evidence of unshakable loyalty to the Fuhrer and the closest unity of the army and the party." After July 1944 the Wehrmacht

And

the general staff of the German ground forces turned into a silent, fear-hunted weapon in the hands of the Fuhrer, who inexorably led the country and the army to defeat.

Guderian later wrote about Hitler after 20 July:

"As for his firmness, it turned into cruelty, and the tendency to bluff was replaced by outright dishonesty. He often lied without the slightest hesitation, believing

What

and others lie to him. Hitler didn't trust anyone anymore, and it became quite difficult to have a relationship with him.

case. Every month it became more and more torture. He often lost his temper, became more and more unrestrained in expressions. There was no one in his immediate environment who could influence him in a deterrent way."

Despite such unflattering assessments, it must be admitted that after July 20, 1944, A. Hitler was able at such a difficult time to establish control over the retreating troops, mobilize the nation and prolong the agony of the Reich for almost a year. Most of the German people and the army still believed the Führer and were ready for a feat at his word. Like silent cattle, with touching faith and even enthusiasm that elevated the German nation above others, the Germans bravely rushed after their Fuhrer into the abyss that opened up before them, threatening misfortune and death.

The situation of the German troops on the Western Front was difficult, where the Wehrmacht lost almost 500 thousand people, half of whom were taken prisoner, as well as almost all tanks, artillery and trucks. The Siegfried Line, widely

publicized by Hitler, was actually unmanned and had no artillery. Most of the German generals who commanded troops on the Western Front no longer believed in the victory of Germany and believed that the end had

come. "For me, the war ended in September 1944," General Rundstedt, who was reinstated on September 4 as

commander-in-chief of all German troops in the West, admitted during the investigation after the war.

But A. Hitler was of a different opinion. Having gathered the generals at headquarters in the last days of August, he declared with complete certainty:

Don't despair, nothing is lost yet. If necessary, we will fight on the Rhine. It doesn't matter where. As Frederick the Great said, under any circumstances, we will fight until the last of our hated enemies is exhausted and refuses to continue the fight. We will fight until

Not

achieve a peace that will ensure the existence of the German nation for another fifty  
or

for a hundred years and which, above all, will not tarnish our honor a second time, as happened in 1918 ... I live only to continue this struggle,

because I know that if an iron will does not stand behind it, it is doomed. ..

Believe that there will come a time when the discord between the allies will become so serious that there will be a break. All coalitions in history have collapsed sooner or later. Main -

it is to wait for the right moment, regardless of any difficulties.

A. Hitler entrusted Goebbels with the task of carrying out "total mobilization", and Himmler, as the new commander of the reserve army, instructed him to form 25 new divisions from the militia to defend the western borders. But Goebbels could not complete the task, since Hitler categorically forbade sending women to enterprises instead of men.

"To sacrifice our dearest ideals is too high a price," he said. - A German woman should take care of the house and raise children. Let the Russians and the British put a woman to the machine, turning them into men. We will not do this.

Nevertheless, Goebbels engaged in "total mobilization." All male teenagers aged 15 to 18 and men aged 50 to 60 were drafted into the army. Was

the administrative apparatus of ministries, departments and enterprises was reduced, an additional part of students was mobilized. As a result, in September-October 1944, an additional 500,000 Germans were put under arms.

Since the Napoleonic Wars, German soldiers have not had to fight on their own soil. In all subsequent wars, Prussia or Germany seized and devastated the lands of other peoples. Now the fire of war has spread

on

their homeland, threatening to destroy homes, property, families. Some didn't last  
began

mass desertion, surrender. Himmler took drastic action, promising to shoot the family of every traitor or deserter. Of course, he could not take such measures without first consulting with Hitler.

At the end of 1944, Hitler had a bold idea to stop the further offensive of the Anglo-American troops with a powerful blow to Antwerp, which was a major rear base of the Allied command. To carry out this strike, the best forces and means at the disposal of the commander of the Western Front were concentrated. But

The Fuhrer placed special hopes on the detachment of O. Skorzeny, whose personnel they decided to change into American uniforms and put on captured American military equipment.

The generals dissuaded the Fuhrer from implementing this plan, citing a lack of manpower and resources. But A. Hitler did not want to listen to them.

"You don't need to try to teach me," the Fuhrer was angry. "I commanded the German army during the course of the war for five years, and in that time gained more practical experience than any gentleman on the general staff could ever hope to have. I studied Clausewitz and Moltke, I read all the works of Schlieffen. I know the situation better than you.

Hitler's plan was partially successful. On December 16, the German panzer group launched an offensive and the next day approached Stavelot, eight miles from Spa. Spa housed the headquarters of the 1st American Army, which had to be urgently evacuated. Moreover,

only in

a mile from the Germans was the largest fuel depot, which contained three million gallons of gasoline. Without this gasoline, almost all Allied equipment could become.

The so-called 150th tank brigade of O. Skorzeny advanced the furthest, the personnel of which were dressed in American uniforms and put on previously captured American tanks, trucks and jeeps. Through the unoccupied sections of the front, she managed to slip in 40 jeeps with soldiers to the Meuse River. Skorzeny's soldiers in US military police uniforms began to set up posts at crossroads and divert allied columns along false routes. Some of Skorzeny's most trained fighters went to Paris in order to destroy General Eisenhower there.

But that was the end of the action. Later it became known that on December 16, the Allies captured a German officer who had an offensive plan with him. The military police were put on high alert, total checks began on the roads. Germans detained in American uniforms were shot on the spot.

The legendary O. Skorzeny himself was also taken prisoner. He was tried by the American Tribunal in Dachau in 1947 and ... acquitted. After that, he went to Spain, and then

v

South America, where he organized a flourishing cement company and wrote his memoirs.

The year 1945 was fatal for Germany and A. Hitler. The superior forces of the enemy troops pressed the troops of the Reich from all sides. The Red Army reached the borders of East Prussia. Romania was defeated, Bulgaria withdrew from the war, Finland capitulated, France was liberated in the west, German troops retreated in Belgium.

On January 9, 1945, the chief of the general staff of the German ground forces, General G. Guderian, went to another reception with Hitler, taking with him the head of intelligence in the east, General Gehlen. They, using maps and diagrams, tried to explain to the Fuhrer the danger of the position of the troops in the area.

"Hitler completely lost his temper," Guderian recalled. "He declared that our maps and diagrams were 'absolutely idiotic' and ordered that the person who prepared them be put in a lunatic asylum. I flared up and said: 'If you are going to imprison General Gehlen in a lunatic asylum, then send me along with him.'"

"Our Eastern Front is as strong as ever," Hitler declared.

"Our Eastern Front is like a house of cards," Guderian remarked. - If it

break through in one place, the whole structure will immediately collapse.

Guderian was right. On January 12, the troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front made a breakthrough on the Upper Vistula, south of Warsaw, and rushed to Silesia. Troops of the 1st Belorussian Front crossed the Vistula north and south of Warsaw, which was taken on 17

January. Further north, Soviet troops captured half of East Prussia and moved to the Gulf of Danzig. On January 27, troops of the 1st Belorussian Front crossed the Oder.

Hitler, with surprising tenacity, continued to believe that the Western Allies, under the threat of the occupation of Germany by the Bolsheviks, would themselves offer him peace.

- Do you think the British are delighted with the events on the Russian front? A little more time, and they themselves will begin to seek a meeting with me in order to negotiate peace.

But the Allies did not seek this meeting.

But most of all, the Fuhrer was upset by the successes of the Soviet troops. On February 13, 1945, Guderian decided to report in detail to the Fuhrer on the situation on the Soviet-German front. Later, he wrote about this: "Before me stood a man with raised fists and purple cheeks with anger, trembling all over and losing all control over himself. After each outburst of indignation, Hitler walked with long steps along the edge of the carpet, then suddenly stopped in front of me and threw a new batch of indignant accusations in my face. He almost squealed, it seemed that his eyes were about to pop out of their sockets, and the veins swollen at the temples would burst.

With all the negative characteristics of A. Hitler, apparently, he understood the situation well. On March 19, he signed a directive requiring the destruction of military, industrial, transport and communications facilities throughout Germany. Armament Minister A. Speer began to object to the entry into force of this directive. "We must do everything to preserve, even in the most primitive way, the basis for the existence of the nation," he wrote in a memorandum addressed to the Fuhrer on March 18. — At this stage of the war

we are not

we have the right to cause destruction that may affect the life of the people. If the enemies want to destroy our nation, which fought with unfathomable courage, then let this historical shame fall entirely on them. It is our duty to preserve for the nation every possibility of rebirth in the distant future..."

But Hitler continued to link his fate with the fate of the nation and the results of the war.

"If the war is lost, the nation will also perish," he declared categorically. "That is her inevitable fate. There is no need to deal with the foundation that a people will need to continue the most primitive existence. On the contrary, it would be much better to destroy all these things with our own hands... In addition, after the battle, only inferior people will survive, because all full-fledged people will be killed.

On March 31, Goebbels, who met with Hitler that day, wrote in his diary: "It just hurts me to see what a bad physical condition the Fuhrer has. He says that he hardly sleeps anymore, that he is constantly busy with work and that he is completely

exhausting the need to constantly cheer up and bring to life their faint-hearted and spineless employees. I can imagine how tedious and troublesome all this is. I just feel sorry for the Fuhrer, especially when I see him in such a state.

Vienna fell on April 13, and US President F. Roosevelt died on that day.

"History itself has taken our side," the Fuhrer said upon learning of this. - Tomorrow the Americans will speak differently.

On April 15, Eva Braun arrived in Berlin to see Hitler. They expected big changes, but did not wait. April 16 Anglo-American troops entered Nuremberg. On April 21, the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front reached the suburbs of Berlin. At 4:40 pm on April 25, the lead elements of the US 69th Infantry Division and the Soviet 58th Guards Division met on the Elbe at Torgau, about 80 kilometers south of Berlin.

Hitler hesitated, remaining in Berlin, although on April 20, on his birthday, he ordered the evacuation of some officials, personal servants and documents to Obersalzberg, the mountain stronghold of Frederick Barbarossa, from where he intended to lead the troops. The generals persuaded him to immediately leave Berlin, but the Fuhrer, as if hypnotized, repeated:

The Russians in the capital of the Reich will suffer one of the most cruel defeats. Everything will go in a completely different way. You need to be patient and wait a day or two.

As a concession to the generals, he agreed to form two commands in case the German forces were separated as a result of the meeting of the allies on the Elbe. The northern command was entrusted to Admiral Dönitz, the southern command to Kesselring.

Hitler did not give up. On April 21, he ordered SS General F. Steiner to launch a counterattack on Soviet troops south of the suburbs of Berlin. On April 22, the Fuhrer was persistently interested all day how this counterattack was developing, but no one knew anything. Instead, the generals reported the beginning of the withdrawal of troops from positions north of Berlin.

- This is the end! the Fuhrer shouted piercingly. - Everyone left me. Around treason, lies, betrayal, cowardice. Everything is over. Wonderful. I am staying in Berlin and personally

I will take charge of the defense of the Third Reich. The rest can go wherever want...

The generals tried to persuade Hitler to leave for Czechoslovakia, where the troops of the army group of Field Marshal F. Scherner and significant forces of Kesselring were located. But Hitler no longer listened to anyone. He locked himself in his bunker and ordered Goebbels and his wife and six children to be invited there. Then he ordered to burn part

his  
archive.

In the evening, he summoned Keitel and Jodl to him and ordered them to go south in order to take command of the troops stationed there.

"You won't be able to lead from here if you don't have a headquarters near you," observed Jodl.

"Then Goering will go south and take command of the troops," the Fuhrer decided.

"I think this is wrong," one of the generals said. None of the soldiers  
will become  
fight to the last for the Reichsmarschall.

"He will have no other choice," the Fuhrer cut off.

In such a difficult situation, some generals decided to offer Goering to take over the negotiations with the allies. On the night of April 23, Koller flew to Munich for this purpose, who immediately went from there to Obersalzberg, where Goering was. Goering had been waiting for this proposal for a long time, but he feared that his mortal enemy M. Bormann would stand in his way. By that time, Göring had a

document that allowed him to assume power in Germany in the event of the death or incapacity of Hitler. It seemed that the time had come. But Goering chickened out and sent a telegram to the Fuhrer:

"My Fuehrer! In view of your decision to remain in Fortress Berlin, do you agree that I immediately take over the overall leadership of the Reich, with full freedom of action in the country and abroad, as your deputy, in accordance with your decree of June 29, 1941? If there is no answer by 10 p.m. today, I will

count  
it goes without saying that you have lost your freedom of action and that conditions have arisen for the entry into force of your decree.

On the same evening, G. Himmler, in another place, in the Swedish consulate in Lübeck, met with Count Bernadotte and said: "The great life of the Fuhrer is coming to an end. In a day or two Hitler will die. I ask that General Eisenhower be informed of the readiness of the German troops to surrender in the west, while they will continue to fight in the east until the Western powers themselves open a front against the Russians.

Bernadotte suggested that Himmler write down the surrender plan, which was done. But both Goering and Himmler were in a hurry. Hitler did not think about surrender and saving the German nation at any cost.

On April 23, Russian troops completed the encirclement of the German capital. On that day Goering's telegram arrived at the Reich Chancellery. M. Bormann did everything to present her like an ultimatum. Hitler went berserk:

"I didn't expect anything else from a man who had already blossomed for a long time, mired in debauchery, became a drug addict," said the Fuhrer. But then, after a moment's thought, he suddenly said, "Good." Let Goering enter into surrender negotiations. In the end, it doesn't matter who does it.

But after a few minutes the Fuhrer changed his mind. He dictated a telegram in which he accused Goering of treason and condemned him to death. "Helpful" Bormann is here  
same

sent a radiogram to the SS headquarters in Berchtesgaden, ordering the immediate arrest of Goering for treason. This order was carried out the next day.

On April 24, near the Reich Chancellery, the brave pilot Hanna Reitsch landed her light plane, who decided to take Hitler out of besieged Berlin. She waited for Hitler's decision for three days, watching the agony of fascism in the casemates of the Reich Chancellery. On April 26, when the shells of the Soviet troops had already begun to fall on this last refuge of the fascist leader, Hitler summoned Hannah and handed her a capsule of poison.

"Hannah," he said. You are one of those who will die with me. I don't want any of us

got into the hands of the Russians alive, I don't want them to find our bodies. Eve's body and mine  
body  
burn. And you choose your path.

On April 28, Hitler suddenly began to talk about the fact that Wenck's army would soon come and save the day. But there was no news from the troops. At 8 pm Bormann, on the orders of the Fuhrer, sent a telegram to Dönitz: "Instead of inciting the troops to move forward in the  
name of our salvation, the responsible persons remain silent. Judging

By  
everything, betrayal has replaced fidelity.

On the night of April 29-30, before dawn, Hitler married Eva Braun. An official to carry out this act was brought to the bunker on the orders of Goebbels. He certified with his signature that Eva Braun, the Führer's companion since 1933, is of Aryan origin and does not suffer from any hereditary diseases. Goebbels and Bormann signed the act of Hitler's marriage.

Well orchestrated by Goebbels and Bormann, the act of marrying the Führer in a purely Aryan spirit was supposed to put Hitler in a solemn mood. He was mentally prepared for another ceremony - death in the spirit of Wagner and the ancient Germanic sagas. The great and courageous leader does not submit to the enemy and consciously accepts death, followed by his faithful girlfriend. Frozen in reverence, the people are watching the death of the leader,

A  
then he composes songs about him that are passed down from generation to generation ...

At the end of the marriage ceremony, a breakfast was held in a close circle, after which Hitler dictated his political and then personal testament for history. In the first, he removed Goering and Himmler from all posts, renounced them and cursed them as traitors. The Fuhrer's  
successor was Admiral Dönitz. In his personal will, Hitler declared Bormann his executor, who was supposed to see to it that the first will was carried  
out.

At the end of the day on April 29, news came of the execution of Mussolini and his mistress Clara Petacci, whom the Italian partisans hung on lanterns in Milan. Hearing this, Hitler looked expressively at Eva and said nothing, she turned very pale and bit her lip.

On Monday, April 30, 1945, at 3:30 pm, Hitler and Eva passed away. The mortal earthly path of fascist No. 1 was completed before the Soviet soldiers hoisted the Banner of Victory over the Reichstag.

Could Hitler have defeated the Soviet Union?



For more than forty years, the question of whether A. Hitler could have won the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) did not appear on the agenda as completely immoral and not allowing any other answer than the one given by history in May 1945. But later

behind

abroad, and then in Russia itself, people appeared who seriously began to ask this

question, and the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people against Nazi Germany began to be called a civil war within Soviet society for a number of signs invented by them.

The victory of some states over others is a very multifaceted phenomenon, which is measured not only by concluded treaties and is achieved not only as a result of war. This is the result of an eternal struggle, which is also carried out in peacetime, but whose goals are practically the same as those of the military. Mankind continues to live in any

conditions, both in a state of peace and in a state of war, solving its main task

—  
creating conditions for the continuation of life. True, in parallel with purely physiological needs, a person developed a craving for power and hoarding, which from time immemorial began to be solved by war.

War is a socio-political phenomenon, which is an extreme form of solving various problems by means of armed violence. Weapons, troops and reserves, cadres and dominant military theories form the basis of the means of armed violence. These are objective factors of future victory, which manifest themselves in the course of specific battles and operations.

Let us first consider only objective factors, the most important of which are the means of armed struggle, that is, weapons and military equipment. Today it is already well known that by the beginning of the war the Red Army had at its disposal means of armed struggle that outnumbered the enemy in numbers.

The balance of forces of the parties to the beginning of the Great Patriotic War on the Soviet-German front

Means Germany and | Western Ratio (thousand units) ve allies  
| borders of the USSR

Guns and mortars  
Warplanes \_| 59 | 92 [1:16 —

In addition, in the internal military districts and in the reserve of the high command, the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941 had another 8.4 thousand tanks, 63.9 thousand guns

And

mortars, 10.8 thousand combat aircraft, most of which he had opportunity

already in the first months of the war to throw against the enemy. Naturally, there were no such reserves in the rear of the German troops, who were forced to fight on two fronts. Sources

testify that on June 22, 1941, on all other fronts and in reserve, they had 2.4 thousand tanks, 43.1 thousand guns and mortars, 7.8 thousand aircraft, but less than 30% of these funds. Therefore, we can safely say that by the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet Union outnumbered the enemy in artillery - 2 times, in combat aircraft - 4 times, in tanks

-5 times.

The outbreak of war demanded the deployment of new capacities for the production of means of armed struggle and presented new, higher requirements for the quality of weapons and military equipment of the warring parties. There was an urgent need to increase the firepower and armor protection of tanks, to develop means of combating enemy tanks. It was necessary to increase the firing and mobile capabilities of artillery. It was necessary to improve the quality of combat aircraft, especially fighters, designed to solve the main task - gaining air supremacy.

The Germans themselves admitted that the Soviet KV and T-34 tanks were better than their R7-Sh and R2-[U. So, the reaction of the German troops to the T-34 in 1941 bordered on panic - it was even decided not to engage in single combat with them. But then it was proposed to develop new German tank models: R7-U "Panther" weighing 35 tons and R7-U1 "Tiger" weighing up to 60

tons, as well as the Ferdinand self-propelled gun, which could successfully fight the Soviet T-34 tanks.

The Soviet Union was also busy building new tanks and self-propelled guns. During the war years, the production of KV and T-34 tanks with an 85 mm caliber gun, as well as new IS-2, Su-76, Su-85, Su-100, Su-122, Su-152 self-propelled guns, was launched. Total

period 1942-1945 in the USSR, 72 prototypes of new tanks and self-propelled guns were created, from

of which 29 samples were mastered in mass production. New tanks and almost all self-propelled artillery mounts were in no way inferior to the new German tanks, and some of them even surpassed enemy combat vehicles in terms of gun power, armor thickness and maneuverability.

Also, the Soviet Union defeated the enemy in the quantity and quality of the development of new artillery systems. So, in addition to the massive pre-war guns of the 1935-1937 model, in 1942 and 1943 new 45-mm anti-tank guns, 76-mm regimental and divisional guns, 152-mm howitzers, 82-mm, 120-mm and 160 -mm mortars.

To combat enemy tanks, the production of new 45-mm, 57-mm and 100-mm anti-tank guns began. The new guns had a greater range, maneuverability and accuracy of firing. In addition, mass production of 82-mm (BM-8), 132-mm (BM-13), 300-mm (BM-30) multiple launch rocket systems was launched.

Particularly impressive was the victory of the Soviet Union in the creation of new combat aircraft during the war years. So, in addition to the existing aircraft of old designs, the Air Force began to receive new aircraft

Yak-3, Yak-7, Yak-9, La-5, La-7, Il-10, Tu-2. For all the years of the war in the USSR, 25 new types were mastered and put into mass production.

aircraft

(including modifications) and 23 types of aircraft engines. The armament, bomb load, armor protection, ceiling, flight range and speed of new aircraft have increased. As a result, if in 1941 the German Air Force surpassed Soviet aircraft in

almost all models, then already in 1943 this shortcoming was eliminated.

In addition, during the Great Patriotic War, intense work was carried out in the USSR in the field of creating jet aircraft. In the summer of 1943, research in the field of uranium fission was resumed, for which a special laboratory was

created, headed by Academician IV Kurchatov. In 1944, S.P. Korolev, with a group of designers, began to create ballistic missiles. Research was carried out on a broad front in the field of radar, semiconductors and polymers, camouflage, ammunition, fuels and lubricants.

The volumes of production of the main types of weapons and equipment in the Soviet Union were constantly high, and in critical periods of the war they increased significantly.

Volumes of production of the main types of weapons and equipment in the Soviet Union during the Great Patriotic War

Name 1-4.1945

Small arms E 1.38  
weapons of all types  
(million units) "

Tanks and self-propelled  
guns of all types (thousand units)

Guns and mortars | 53.6 | 287.0 | 126.0

all types (thousand pieces)

Aircraft of all types | 11.5 | 25.4 | 34.9 | 40.2

(thousand pieces)

Warships 35 5 14 4 2 70 main classes  
[ate, |

\* without revolvers and pistols.

The table shows that since the beginning of the war, Soviet industry has been rapidly increasing the production of medium and heavy tanks, self-propelled artillery mounts, anti-tank guns, fighters and attack aircraft. This made it possible, despite heavy losses, to meet the needs of the active army in heavy weapons and military equipment at a sufficiently high level, to quickly restore the combat capability of the troops, and make up for their losses during the operation.

The number of main military equipment in service with the Red Army during various periods of the war (in thousands)

As of condition Tanks and self-propelled guns Combat  
guns: and mortars aircraft

January 1, 1942 717 (2.2) 48.6 (30.0) 12.0 (5.4)

7.7 (2.2)

1.01.1943 20.6 (8/1) 161.6 (91.4) 21.9 (12.3) 1.01.1944 244 (5.8 )  
244.4 (101.4) 32.5 (13.4) 1.01.1945 135.4 (8.3) 244.4 (114.6) 43.3  
(21.5)

Note: in brackets - including in the army.

The capabilities of the German military-industrial complex were not very high: in May 1940, the share of defense products was only 15%. But then this figure began to grow steadily. So, in 1941 it increased to 19%, in 1942 - up to 26%, in 1943 - up to 38%, in 1944 - up to 50%. Thus, the share of defense products in Germany's total production more than tripled during the war years.

Nevertheless, in the number of means of warfare produced, Germany was much behind the Soviet Union. One of the reasons for this was that German industrialists (private owners of factories) invested with some trepidation in expanding their production, and even more so in its technical reconstruction. The production was organized by representatives of the branches of the armed forces, while part

enterprises were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of War, and part - the civilian Ministry of Economics, there was no unified system of military-economic planning.

A. Hitler was aware of the shortcomings of the German economy and constantly demanded an increase in the production of new weapons and military equipment. After the Stalingrad disaster, which ended in early 1943, he realized that there was practically no chance of winning, and began to fight for a "draw". To this end, a more organized production of weapons and military equipment, primarily new designs, began. But already from 1944, a significant reduction in military production began to occur in Germany. The possibilities of the country were limited. The public debt of Germany from the end of 1939 to the spring of 1945 increased almost 10 times and reached an astronomical

time figure of 387 billion marks.

From the second half of 1943, Germany began to lose the occupied territories in the Soviet Union (access to sources of raw materials). Massive bombing of Germany by the Allies began to damage its military production, slowing down its growth and producing

great destruction. At the same time, losses in weapons and military equipment were constantly growing, for which there was no longer the strength to compensate.

Thus, during the war, Germany lost to the USSR in terms of the quantity and quality of production of all the main means of armed struggle. The hopes of the Nazi leadership for a "miracle weapon" - nuclear weapons, V-1 and V-2 rockets, jet

Me-262 fighters and the latest submarines, capable of staying under water for several weeks, did not justify themselves.

Another essential component of victory in any war is the troops and reserves of the opposing sides. As you know, the recruitment of the Red Army on the eve and during the Great Patriotic War took place at the expense of the population of the USSR. On 1 January, the population of the Soviet Union was estimated at 167.6 million people. As of June 22, there were 4.8 million personnel in the army and navy. In addition, there were almost 75,000 more people in paramilitary formations of other departments that were on the payroll of NGOs, and 805,300 people were at training camps. In total, by the beginning of the war in the USSR, almost 5.7 million people were under arms.

By the beginning of the attack on the USSR, 64.5 million people lived in Germany, and 8.5 million people were under arms, of which 5.5 million people were in the eastern group. Population

countries allied to Germany (Hungary, Romania, Italy, Finland) in total reached 80 million people, but they put only 0.9 million under arms

Human.

Compensating for these losses for Germany with its limited human resources became more and more difficult every year. A call for additional ages was constantly announced, teenagers, practically children, were put under arms.

The casualties of the Wehrmacht during the period of its victories amounted to a total of about 1.8 million people: in 1941 - 753.3 thousand people, in 1942 - 1018.3 thousand people. Subsequently, the number of losses of the Wehrmacht constantly increased. So, already in the first half of

1943, the Wehrmacht lost over 800 thousand people, in the second - more than 1.3

million.

The Soviet troops also suffered huge losses. In the period from June 22, 1941 to November 18, 1942 (from the beginning of the war until the completion of the defense near Stalingrad), Soviet troops (irrevocable and sanitary) lost 11,162 thousand people. Over time, losses decreased.

So, in the second period of the war (from November 1942 to the end of 1943), they lost 8538 thousand

people, in 1944 - 6870 thousand people. Despite these enormous casualty figures, the country's mobilization resources were so large that the losses incurred did not only

replenished, but there was an increase in the number of the Armed Forces of the USSR. If at the end of 1941 the payroll of the active army was slightly more than 3 million people, then at the end of 1942 it had 5.3 million

people, at the end of 1943 - 6.4 million people, at the end of 1944 - 6.55 million

Human.

The presence of weapons, military equipment and human resources forced both Germany and the Soviet Union to constantly change the organizational structure

their formations, units and divisions.

The organizational and staffing structure of the German troops during the war years changed along the line of creating new formations with a weakening of combat capability.

The tank troops of the Wehrmacht consisted of tank divisions, which included 209 tanks in June 1941. To conduct operations in decisive directions, all tank divisions were reduced to four tank groups of 5

tank

divisions each. On average, a tank group consisted of up to one thousand tanks.

In border battles in June - the first half of July 1941, German tank divisions suffered significant losses, as a result of which the number of tanks in them almost halved.

A. Hitler, instead of reinforcing connections at the expense of reserves, ordered the creation of new divisions. This short-sighted policy extended to the Panzerwaffe. Tanks that were out of order during the fighting did not have time to restore. As a result, tank divisions "shrank" to the size of a regiment and even a battalion. So, it is known that on November 19, 1942, when the Soviet troops launched a counteroffensive near Stalingrad, only 5 combat vehicles

remained in the 14th Panzer Division, 28 in the 16th, and 24th in the 24th =)

In the autumn of 1942, 11 new tank battalions were formed, which received the Tiger tanks. But some of these battalions had to be sent to North Africa. In the Battle of Kursk, the Germans lost almost 1,500 tanks, which finally undermined their strike power.

In 1944, a new staff of Wehrmacht tank divisions was introduced. Each tank division had less than 100 tanks. According to the state of 1945, a tank division consisted of one tank and one motorized regiment. Tanks were only in the tank regiment, which, in turn, consisted of one tank and one motorized battalion. There were only 40 tanks in the tank battalion, 6 combat vehicles in the motorized battalion.

The Soviet troops also improved their organizational structure, which developed in the direction of increasing the combat capabilities of units, formations

and

associations at the expense of regular and attached funds. First of all, this was expressed in an increase in the fire capabilities of the troops.

The loss of a large amount of artillery at the beginning of the war and the deployment of new military formations led to its shortage. Therefore, it was decided to collect all the available artillery on a divisional scale and divide it into two groups: infantry support groups and long-range groups. The first included relatively weak artillery (caliber 76 mm), which was intended to defeat the enemy at the forefront. The second (caliber 122 and 152 mm) - for counter-battery combat. Artillery densities were low. So, during the counter-offensive of the Soviet troops near Moscow, the total density was about 10 guns and mortars (caliber 76 mm and above) per 1 kilometer of the front, and up to 40 in the breakthrough sector.

Subsequently, the picture began to change. Number of artillery in regiments and divisions

increased, corps artillery appeared. In the army, in addition to the artillery units of the RGK, units of rocket artillery began to arrive. Headquarters deployed artillery divisions first, and then breakthrough artillery corps. Thereby

fell away

the need to create artillery groups for their intended purpose, they began to be created according to the regular principle: in a regiment, in a division, in a corps, in the army. Each group could solve fire missions in full. Artillery densities were constantly increasing. So, during the counter-offensive near Stalingrad, they already reached 90 guns and mortars per | kilometer of the breakthrough area, in the Belarusian operation of 1944 - 180-220 guns and mortars per 1 kilometer of the breakthrough area, in the Berlin operation - 286 guns and mortars per | kilometer of the breakthrough area.

Thanks to the increase in the density of artillery, Soviet troops switched from firing at selective targets during the war to a planned defeat of the enemy in three periods: fire preparation for an attack, fire support for an attack, and artillery support for an offensive by troops in depth. Fire support for the attack began to be planned and carried out using the method of a single, and then a double fire shaft. To mislead the enemy about the start of the attack, they began to practice overlapping fire raids. All fire damage in the complex was called an artillery offensive.

During the war years, rifle regiments, divisions and corps did not have their own tanks. The defeat of the mechanized corps at the beginning of the war led to the fact that all the surviving tanks, by order of the Headquarters of July 15, 1941, tried to be assembled into separate

tank

divisions consisting of two tank regiments, but in practice this could not be done. Therefore, by order of January 1, 1942, it was decided to form 120 separate

tank brigades for 91 tanks (7 KV tanks, 20 T-34 or T-50 tanks and 64 T-60 tanks). Subsequently, the number of tanks in the brigade was reduced

to 46 units, and then to 27 units. In parallel, to reinforce the rifle divisions operating in the main direction, it was decided to begin the formation of separate tank battalions of 36 combat vehicles. In total, by the end of 1941, the Red Army had 7 tank divisions (4 of them in the Far East), 76 separate tank brigades and 100 separate tank battalions. (50 years of the Armed Forces of the USSR. S. 270).

All this in combination, with a catastrophic shortage of tanks, led to their dispersion across the fronts, armies and divisions. Thus, the density of tanks in the offensive operations of the Soviet troops near Moscow was very low, and even in the directions of the main

strikes did not exceed 1-2 combat vehicles on | front kilometer.

The experience of combat operations gained in the winter of 1941/42 showed that the absence of large tank formations in the composition of the fronts and armies does not make it possible to ensure the development of tactical success into operational success during the offensive. And already in March 1942 for check

the arrival of new tanks, the formation of the first four tank corps begins according to

100 tanks each.

By order of the People's Commissar of Defense on May 29, 1942, the number of tanks in the corps was increased to 183 units. At the same time, the formation of tank armies began, which were supposed to have 431 combat vehicles according to the state. Thus, the 5th Panzer Army, which participated in the counteroffensive near Stalingrad as part of the Southwestern Front, was able to provide a total tank density of up to 14 units per 1 kilometer of the front, and up to 40 units in the direction of the main attack.

By the end of World War II, the Red Army had six tank armies and about a dozen separate tank and separate mechanized corps. A tank army could include up to two tank and mechanized corps. As part of a separate tank corps - 257-270 tanks

And

Self-propelled guns, as part of a mechanized corps - up to 246 tanks and self-propelled guns.

The mobile troops included parts of self-propelled guns (SU), which attacked in a single battle formation with tanks. As a result, the density of tanks and SU per 1 kilometer of the offensive front in the final operations of the Great Patriotic

War increased to 70 units.

Of great importance was the engineering support of the combat operations of the troops. During the war, the engineering troops were armed with various military engineering vehicles, which made it possible to mechanize part of the work on strengthening the terrain, laying roads, building bridges, and erecting barriers.

In organizational terms, from the second period, sapper, engineer-sapper, engineer-assault, pontoon-bridge brigades began to form. Sapper armies were even created to build rear defensive lines. By the beginning of 1942, there were 10 sapper armies. Each army included up to five sapper brigades, a mechanization detachment and an auto-tractor battalion. In the autumn of 1942, the sapper armies were abolished, and the sapper brigades were subordinated to the armies and fronts as reserve brigades of the Supreme High Command.

The Great Patriotic War put forward special requirements for air defense. On the eve of the war, the air defense forces had such an operational association as the zone

air defense. In total, the territory of the USSR was divided into 13 such zones, but their ability to protect against enemy air strikes was limited. In 1942, the formation of air defense armies began, and by the end of the war six such armies had been created. The air defense army usually included 2-3 fighter aviation divisions, 2-3 anti-aircraft artillery divisions, 5-8 separate anti-aircraft artillery regiments, 2-3 searchlight regiments, up to 3 barrage balloon regiments.

Air armies in the Air Force of the Red Army began to be created in May-June 1942. Each front began to have, as a rule, one air army, consisting of

which included fighter, assault and bomber divisions, as well as separate special aviation units. The composition of the air army of front-line aviation was constantly increasing, and if in 1942 and 1943 it had about 400-600 combat aircraft, then by 1944 their number had grown to 1000-1500 units. Total

v

During the war years, 17 air armies were formed.

But it is well known that the existence of only the means of armed struggle is in itself



does not guarantee victory. One must be able to wield the available weapons, and on the scale of the armed forces one must be able to prepare and carry out large-scale strategic

operations, fronts and armies - to conduct operations in their directions (regions), corps and divisions - to conduct battles. That is, everything rests on the military art of the parties, the ability of the troops to advance or defend themselves qualitatively.

In the prewar years, in connection with the massive appearance of tanks and aviation, great changes took place in the field of military art. A theory of a deep offensive operation has emerged, the essence of which boils down to the simultaneous defeat of the enemy's defenses to the entire operational depth by delivering a strong initial strike by artillery and infantry and its rapid development into the depth by large formations of tank troops, combined with massive air strikes and airborne landings.

The German command was the first to master this operation in practice, and their offensive operations in 1941 and the first half of 1942 were distinguished by their large scale, depth, and the pace of the offensive. They skillfully combined the actions of infantry and tank formations, carried out tactical airborne landings, carried out a bold maneuver in new directions, used such effective methods of conducting an offensive as parallel pursuit, reaching the flanks and rear of the enemy, and encirclement.

It must be admitted that the Soviet troops at the beginning of the war did not seem to master the art of defense at all. In many directions they led a retreat, sometimes resembling a flight. Practically without a fight, favorable natural boundaries along the rivers, lines of fortified areas along the old border of the USSR were left. It seemed that the experience of positional defense during the First World War and the provisions of combat regulations and instructions of the interwar period were completely forgotten.

The scope (width and depth), the time of the operation, as well as the number of losses of the parties can be called as criteria for military art. Moreover, it must be understood that

according to the logic of military art, the defending side, which makes extensive use of the terrain and various engineering barriers, should suffer less losses than the attacking side.

In the Military Diary of the Chief of the General Staff of the German Ground Forces, Colonel-General F. Halder, it is indicated that on July 13, 1941, the total losses of the Wehrmacht ground forces on the Eastern Front amounted to 92.1 thousand people.

In the course of a strategic defensive operation in the Baltic states, in 18 days, Soviet troops retreated 400-450 km, while losing 88.5 thousand people. During the defensive operation in Belarus, they retreated 450-600 km in 18 days, losing 417.8 thousand people.

During the defensive operation in Western Ukraine, they retreated 300-350 km in 15 days, losing 241.6 thousand people. Thus, only in the first 18 days of the war, the losses of Soviet troops (not counting the Arctic) reached almost 748 thousand people.

Thus, during the first 18 days of the war, Soviet troops lost a significant part of the territory of the European part of the country and 8 times more personnel than the enemy. Huge losses were in military equipment.

This was followed by unsuccessful operations in the south of Ukraine, near Smolensk, in the Kyiv region, in the Donbass. Available

According to data, the losses of the Soviet troops as of December 31, 1941 amounted to: in terms of personnel - 2993.8 thousand people, in artillery of various calibers - 101 thousand pieces, in tanks - 20.5 thousand pieces, in aircraft - more than 10 thousand pieces, by ships and

submarines - 325 pieces.

The Soviet high command only came to its senses near Moscow. In the course of heavy defensive battles that lasted 67 days, the Red Army, in the process of retreating 700-1110 kilometers, bled the enemy's strike groups and, gaining time, ensured the concentration of large reserves in the Moscow direction. The enemy grouping turned out to be stretched out on the front for more than 1000 kilometers, and its rear fell behind

from

troops for 700-800 kilometers. In the Moscow strategic defensive operation (September 30 - December 5, 1941),

Soviet troops irretrievably lost 514.3 thousand people,

wounded and frostbitten - 144 thousand people, and in total - 658.3 thousand people.

The German command does not give an exact figure for the losses of the fascist troops near Moscow. But, relying on the War Diary of F. Halder, we see that the total losses of the Wehrmacht ground forces from September 30 to December 12, 1941 slightly exceeded 200 thousand people. Even if we assume that the most active

battles at that time took place  
on

Moscow direction, and on others - private, then the losses of the Germans during the defensive operation near Moscow can be estimated at about 150 thousand people.

It is known that the first serious defeat was inflicted on the enemy in the counteroffensive near Moscow, which lasted from December 5, 1941 to January 7, 1942. It lasted 34 days. The total width of the front of hostilities was 1000 kilometers, and the depth of advance of the Soviet troops was 100-250 kilometers. The average daily rate of advance of infantry formations was 3-6 km.

During this operation, the enemy's plan to capture Moscow was thwarted, and the troops of Army Group Center were defeated. The myth of the invincibility of the German troops was dispelled. The German command does not publish the number of losses during the offensive of the Soviet troops near Moscow. But, referring to the War Diary of F. Halder, it can be calculated that from December 10, 1941 to February 10, 1942, the German ground forces lost 191

thousand people on the Eastern Front. A significant part of these forces was located near Moscow. During the operation,

the Soviet troops irretrievably lost 139.6 thousand people, wounded and frostbite - 231.4 thousand people.

Thus, since the end of 1941, it is already necessary to talk about the Soviet military art, although very carefully. The General Staff of the Red Army, headed by Marshal of the Soviet Union B. M. Shaposhnikov, began to plan operations for groups of fronts and sought to carry them out.

After the battle of Moscow, Soviet military science also became more active. Beginning in the winter of 1942, the troops began to receive various kinds of memos and

brochures of the series "From the combat experience of a front-line soldier". The "Memo to tankers on the fight between our tanks and enemy tanks", published in the summer of 1942, the brochure of the Hero of the Soviet Union, Major General A.I., was widely disseminated among the troops. Lizyukov "What you need

know

soldier of the Red Army on the fighting techniques of the Germans "(January 1942), the collection "Artillery Offensive" (April 1942). For the systematic and purposeful study and generalization of combat experience and its dissemination among the troops, in May 1942, a special department was created at the General Staff of the Red Army to study the experience of the Great Patriotic

War, which, together with the military history department, significantly expanded the scope of scientific research into the combat experience of active troops.

However, the mistakes of the Soviet command made in the spring of 1942 cannot be regarded otherwise than as major shortcomings in Soviet military art. As a result of the Voronezh-Voroshilovgrad defensive operation (June 28 - July 24, 1942), which was carried out at the front up to 900 kilometers for 27 days, Soviet troops

retreated to

150-400 kilometers, Soviet troops left the Donbass and retreated to Rostov-on-Don. At the same time, their casualties amounted to 568.3

thousand people. The losses of the German ground forces, according to F. Halder, for two months of the offensive as of July 20, 1942 amounted to 26.3 thousand people.

The failures of the Red Army in the summer of 1942 were also carefully studied and analyzed by the General Staff of the Red Army. As a result, NPO order No. 306 of October 8, 1942, which introduced new battle formations for rifle troops in the offensive, and NPO order No. 325 of October 16, 1942, which obliged

use

tank and mechanized corps massively as a success development echelon

on

direction of the main attack. A new combat charter for infantry up to and including the division (BUP-42) was developed.

The Stalingrad defensive operation (July 17 - November 18, 1942) became a turning point in the course of the Great Patriotic War. During this time, they developed and published

new combat documents on the organization of defense, the use of military branches in this type of hostilities, a well-known order was published, called "Not a Step Back". Soviet troops stood up to defend the city, which bore the name of Stalin.

The operation was carried out on a front of 250-520 kilometers for 125 days. During this time, Soviet troops were forced to retreat 150 kilometers, losing 643.8 thousand people.

But the enemy could not achieve the goal. On September 24, 1942, the Chief of the General Staff of the German Ground Forces, General F.

Halder, was dismissed,

connection with

than stopped counting the losses of his troops. But he points out that from July 20 to September 10, they lost more than 246 thousand people

on the Soviet-German front. But the main phase of the struggle for Stalingrad was still ahead.

It is known that the counter-offensive of the Soviet troops near Stalingrad (November 19, 1942 - February 2, 1943) became the turning point of the Great Patriotic War. By that time, the Soviet troops had become physically stronger, they even created two

tank armies of mixed composition (several rifle and two tank corps). AND

Although

such an army numbered less than 400 tanks (the mechanized corps of 1941 - 1031 tanks), but it was capable of developing tactical success into an operational one. Operation indicators: duration — 76 days. The width of the combat front is 850 km. The depth of advance of the Soviet troops is 150-200 km. The average daily rate of advance of infantry formations is 1.5-2.5 km, tank and mechanized - 4-4.5 km. As a result of the operation, the beginning of a radical change in the course of the Great Patriotic War was laid. The encirclement and destruction of the main forces of the 4th tank and 6th field armies of the enemy, the defeat of the 3rd and 4th Romanian armies, caused great damage to the 8th Italian army. The total

losses of the enemy amounted to over 800 thousand people. During the operation, the Soviet troops irretrievably lost 154.9 thousand people, wounded and sick - 330.9 thousand people.

As a result of this operation, a draft of the new Field Regulations (PU-43) was developed and the regulations of the branches of the armed forces and combat arms were revised. The charters were developed with the involvement of a wide range of specialists and experienced commanders from the troops. After that, they were considered at a meeting of the Headquarters, where commanders and commanders of various degrees were invited from the fronts.

The Battle of Kursk (July 5 - August 23, 1943) became the largest strategic operation of the decisive 1943. Its main result is the disruption of the enemy's plans to turn the tide of the war in their favor and the defeat of the troops of Army Group Center. The operation lasted 50 days and consisted

of a defensive phase, a meeting engagement and two offensive operations. The width of the combat front is 550 km. The depth of the withdrawal of the Soviet troops is 12-35 km, the subsequent advance of the Soviet troops is 140-150 km. The average daily rate of advance of infantry formations is 4-7 km, for tank and mechanized formations, 7-15 km. The German command does not publish the exact number of losses of its troops. During the operation, the Soviet troops irretrievably lost 254.4 thousand people, wounded - 677.3 thousand people.

So, for the first time during the operation, Soviet troops suffered fewer losses than the enemy. The Central Front (commander K. K. Rokossovsky) not only took a hit on a well-prepared defense, but also carried out artillery counter-preparation against the enemy that was ready for the offensive. The Voronezh Front forced the enemy to change the offensive of his main attack and engage in a head-on battle under unfavorable conditions for him. The superiority of Soviet military art is evident. Only degree

this

superiority is somewhat reduced due to the fact that the Soviet troops in the Kursk region outnumbered the enemy, had enough time to organize their defense and partially knew the plans of the enemy. But to force the enemy to advance in such conditions is also a victory.

In the summer of 1944, the Soviet command prepared and successfully carried out the Belarusian strategic offensive operation (June 23 - August 29, 1944). During

In this operation, the troops of the enemy's strategic grouping, Army Group Center, were defeated, Belarus, part of the Lithuanian and Latvian SSR were liberated from the invaders. The Red Army entered the territory of Poland. It lasted 68 days. The width of the combat front is 1100 km. The depth of advance of the Soviet troops

—

550-600 km. The average daily rate of advance at the first stage of the operation is 20-25 km, on

the second - 13-14 km. The German command does not publish the exact number of losses during the offensive of the Soviet troops in the Belarusian operation. During the operation Soviet

troops irretrievably lost 178.5 thousand people, wounded and sick - 587.3 thousand people.

The Belarusian operation is characterized by a number of moments that can be attributed without exaggeration to the field of military art. This is primarily the encirclement of three large enemy groupings at various depths in the area of Vitebsk, Bobruisk and Minsk. The operational densities of forces and means in the breakthrough areas are rapidly growing. In contrast

from Stalingrad, a mobile outer front of encirclement is created at the expense of tank armies of a homogeneous composition, which, after completing the immediate task, without an operational pause, began an offensive in depth. The task of deeply defeating the enemy, cutting him off

reserves are successfully carried out by partisans.

The Byelorussian operation has not yet been completed, when the Iasi-Kishinev strategic offensive operation begins in the south on August 20. Both operations end V

one day - August 29, 1944.

The Iasi-Kishinev operation is somewhat smaller in scope. Its duration is 10 days. The width of the combat front is 500 km. The depth of advance of the Soviet troops is 300-320 km. The average daily rate of advance of infantry formations is 20-25 km, tank and mechanized - 30-32.

But its results are impressive - the defeat in a short time of the main forces of Army Group "Southern Ukraine", the destruction of 22 German and almost

all

Romanian divisions. Moldova was liberated, Romania left the fascist bloc. During the operation, Soviet troops irretrievably lost 13.2 thousand people, wounded - 53.9 thousand.

Human.

New Year 1945 was marked by the blitzkrieg of the Red Army, which carried out the Vistula-Oder strategic offensive operation between January 12 and February 3, 1945. It lasted 23 days and was fought on a front about 500 km wide. During this time, Soviet troops advanced to a depth of 500 km with an average daily rate of advance of rifle formations - 20-22 km, tank and mechanized - 30-35

km.

The result of the operation was the destruction of 35 German divisions (another 25 divisions suffered heavy losses), the liberation of most of Poland. Soviet troops entered the territory of Germany. During the operation, Soviet and Polish troops irretrievably lost 43.5 thousand people, wounded - 150.9 thousand people.

This operation, in many respects, repeated the most successful operations of the German troops in the summer of 1941. True, the enemy, retreating, was able to avoid large encirclements their

troops, but failed to save the situation and organize a solid defense on any of the intermediate lines.

The Berlin strategic offensive operation (March 16 - May 8, 1945) became a kind of crowning achievement of the military art of the Great Patriotic War. It lasted 23 days. The fighting was carried out on a front of up to 300 km. Promotion depth

Soviet troops amounted to 220 km, the average daily rate of advance - 5-10 km. IN

eventually

The operation achieved the defeat of the Berlin enemy grouping and the capture of Berlin. The number of losses of German troops during the Berlin operation has not been published. During the operation, Soviet and Polish troops

irretrievably lost 81 thousand people, wounded and sick - 280 thousand people.

Thus, the Soviet military art, which was shown during the Great Patriotic War, developed very dynamically, taking into account the advanced combat

experience and

based on military science. It, along with other factors, ensured the victory of the Soviet

Union over Nazi Germany.

The partisan movement, widely deployed by Moscow in the territory occupied by the enemy, also played an important role in ensuring victory over the enemy. The preparation of this movement began already in the 1930s and was an integral part of the training of commanders and staffs. Its organization was carried out by the Main Directorate of the Headquarters of the Red Army and the specially created Departments of the Headquarters of the military districts. Through the OGPU, special schools were created to train saboteurs and radio operators. In the prewar years, exercises were held in a number of western border military districts, in which special partisan units participated. Therefore, it would be wrong to say that with the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the partisan movement behind enemy lines arose spontaneously.

All this made itself felt at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. Already on the seventh day of fascist aggression - June 29, 1941 - a directive was adopted by the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks to the party and Soviet organizations of the front-line regions, which contained instructions on the deployment of an underground and partisan movement.

In September 1941, the Main Directorate for the Formation and Manning of the Red Army Troops (headed by Army Commissar 1st Rank E. A. Shchadenko) created the Directorate for the Formation and Leadership of Partisan Detachments, headed by Lieutenant General V. I. Repin.

The organizational work carried out made itself felt very quickly. Already on September 16, 1941, the chief of staff of the Wehrmacht Supreme Command, W. Keitel, in an order to the troops, noted that a communist partisan movement broke out everywhere in the German-occupied territory, "which increasingly poses a threat to the German leadership of the war."

So, by the end of 1941, 287 partisan detachments and 125 underground organizations and groups, numbering a total of 18 thousand people, were operating in the occupied territory of the Leningrad Region. During the German offensive on Moscow, 273 partisan detachments and 468 partisan groups, which included more than 26

thousand people, operated in their rear.

The commander of the Army Group Center reported that due to the destruction on the railways committed by the partisans, the Army Group Center received only 23 instead of the 70 echelons that were the daily requirement.

At the end of December 1941, I. V. Stalin summoned the first secretary of the Central Committee

Communist Party of Belarus P.K. Ponomarenko and offered to immediately begin organizing the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement at the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command and personally head this headquarters. Ponomarenko enthusiastically got involved in this work, and in January 1942 several schools were opened to train partisan personnel. All this made it possible to deploy new partisan detachments behind enemy lines, to better manage their activities, using it in the interests of the fronts and armies.

According to the German command, from November 1942 to March 1943, Soviet partisans committed more than 2.5 thousand sabotage on the railways, putting out of action about 750 steam locomotives, up to 4 thousand wagons, more than 100 kilometers of railway tracks. During the unfolding battle on the Kursk Bulge, the partisans blew up 1200 enemy echelons and damaged 1145 locomotives. During the Belarusian operation, partisans launched a real rail war behind enemy lines, which actually pinned down the rear of the enemy and prevented maneuver by forces and means behind the front line.

In total, Soviet partisans and underground workers during the Great Patriotic War derailed more than 20 thousand military echelons, blew up about 2 thousand railway and over 9.5 thousand highway bridges, destroyed about 65 thousand cars, 4.5 thousand tanks, 1100 aircraft, 2900 warehouses and enemy bases, withdrawn from

building 3369 km of telephone and telegraph lines behind enemy lines. Partisans and sub-policemen constantly carried out deep reconnaissance of the enemy, committed sabotage and terrorist acts. All this provided very significant assistance to the active troops.

Red Army, who fought on the fronts.

Thus, in the wake of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet Union turned out to be a sufficiently monolithic, cohesive and well-organized force to take revenge on the enemy even after heavy defeats in 1941 and early 1942. Its internal resources were much greater than those of Germany and its satellites, and the management of forces and means was more centralized and flexible. Therefore, the question of the victory of the USSR over Germany was only a matter of time.

At the same time, it must be recognized that a significant contribution to the overall victory over fascism was made by the resistance forces that operated on the territory of the countries occupied by the Nazis.

In France, since August 1941, a series of assassination attempts on representatives of the occupation authorities, sabotage on railways began. The first detachments of "Frontieres and partisans" are created. The result of this was the creation of the National Council of the Resistance, which became the governing body of the liberation struggle. At the beginning of 1944

detachments of different political directions united in the French internal forces. Their biggest military and political success was the armed uprising and the liberation of Corsica. At that time, sabotage on the railways also gained wide scope.

The struggle of the patriots intensified significantly after the landing of the Anglo-American troops in the north-west of France in June 1944. With their own forces, they liberated dozens of departments and provided assistance to the advancing allied troops. Sabotage and

strikes in factories. The culminating point of the French Resistance was the victorious armed uprising in Paris in August 1944.

The resistance movement in Italy was characterized by a certain originality. The fact is that until the summer of 1943 this country was the main European ally of Germany and itself took part in the occupation of France, Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania, Ethiopia, Libya, as well as in military operations against the USSR. After the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship of Mussolini, the northern and central regions of Italy were occupied by German troops. It was here that the anti-fascist liberation movement of the Resistance unfolded. An effective body of political leadership in the struggle of the patriots was formed - the Committee for the National Liberation of Northern Italy. Gradually, a partisan army was created.

At the beginning of June 1944, all combat formations were consolidated into the Corps of Freedom Volunteers with a single command. In a number of regions of northern Italy, the partisans created free zones, the largest of which were called "partisan republics." From June 1944 to March 1945, partisan forces carried out about 6,500 armed actions, about 5,600 acts of sabotage, destroyed at least 16

thousand

invaders captured large trophies. At the end of February 1945, partisan detachments began to descend from the mountains and operate in densely populated areas. In April, an armed uprising broke out in Northern Italy, which made a significant contribution to the liberation of the country from occupation.

In Belgium, until the summer of 1944, the main type of anti-fascist liberation struggle was the underground activity of patriots who committed sabotage, sabotage, assassinations of representatives of the occupation authorities, and armed attacks on small groups of policemen.

In the autumn of 1940, the Belgian partisan army was created, the core of which was made up of fighters from the international brigades that had previously fought in Spain. The second combat organization of the partisan forces was the Belgian army, created by former officers

v

1942. The resistance movement revived significantly in the summer of 1944 in connection with the landing of the allies in France and under the influence of the victories won by the Soviet troops. By this time, the Belgian partisan army numbered up to 50 thousand people,

making up

serious military force. The Independence Front was created, the local committees of which

many areas that were under the control of the resistance movement, became the actual authorities.

In Denmark, the resistance movement consisted of two main currents. One of them focused on cooperation with England. He was represented by bourgeois circles directly connected with British intelligence. The second trend, the democratic one, had its roots in the working class.

In September 1943, the leading center of the national Resistance, the Freedom Council, was created in the country, which assumes the functions of coordinating the actions of combat groups numbering more than 42 thousand people, as well as organizing intelligence activities in the interests of the allied forces. Combat activity intensified.

There are acts of sabotage, mass strikes. On May 5, 1945, British troops entered continental Denmark. On May 11, Soviet soldiers liberated the Danish island



Bornholm.

Detachments of the Resistance movement took part in the disarmament of the invaders.

In Norway, the resistance movement initially had the character of organizing strikes and sabotage. In September 1941, a united combat organization, Milorg, was created. In the winter of 1941/42, the first partisan detachment was organized in the mountains of Central Norway. Communist slogans about a widespread transition to armed struggle appeared. It assumed a wide scope in the first months of 1945. In the beginning of May

Milorg's detachments captured the key points of the country. During this period, the underground army of Norway, which numbered about 40 thousand fighters in its ranks, blocked the German garrisons. On May 9, the Nazi troops capitulated. Soon a new national government was formed, which included members of the resistance movement.

The resistance movement took on various forms in the occupied countries of Central Europe, which were the first victims of German aggression.

In Poland, the main direction of his activity was the creation of partisan detachments and the preparation of a popular armed uprising. At the initiative of the Resistance, a military organization was created - the Guards of Lyudov, the first detachment of which in May 1943 carried out a military action on the railway, marking the beginning of the "rail war". The following year, the Lyudov Guards held 1208 military actions, its detachments participated in 169 major battles with the invaders. As a result, 1545 Nazis were killed and 292 wounded. Much less active was the Craiova Army, which included detachments subordinate to the emigrant government. True, she, like Guards Lyudova, supported the uprising that broke out in April 1943 in the Warsaw ghetto.

On January 1, 1944, the democratic forces of the country formed the Craiova Rada Narodova and proclaimed the creation of the People's Army, which numbered more than 50 thousand fighters. In the summer, the Polish Committee of National Liberation issued a decree on the merger of the two armies that fought against fascism - the 1st Polish Army formed in the USSR (100 thousand people) and the People's Army (60 thousand people) - into a single Polish Army.

| On August 1944, the command of the Home Army, with the consent of the government in exile, raised the Warsaw Uprising (commander General T. Bur Komorowski). The uprising was brutally suppressed by the invaders. Only on January 17, 1945, Soviet troops, together with the 1st Army of the Polish Army, brought liberation to Warsaw.

The Polish resistance movement was one of the largest in Europe. In his underground organizations, 500,000 patriots fought against the invaders. Directly in

about 100 thousand people fought in combat detachments with weapons in their hands. The movement brought considerable damage to the Nazis - they lost over 150 thousand killed and many thousands wounded. During different periods of occupation, the resistance movement fettered from 400 thousand to a million enemy soldiers and officers, as well as police forces. Combat organizations held about 10,000 actions. They destroyed 700 steam locomotives, 20 thousand wagons, blew up about 100 bridges and viaducts.

Under peculiar conditions, the liberation movement developed in Czechoslovakia.

This was explained by the fact that the country was divided by the invaders into two parts: the Czech Republic was officially occupied and turned into a "protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia", a puppet "Slovak state" was created on the territory of another part of the country.

The activities of patriots among the Slovak soldiers sent to the Eastern Front and anti-fascists in the Czech lands intensified from the spring of 1942. It was then that the executioner of the Czech people R. Heydrich was killed by the underground. Partisan detachments arose in the forest regions of the Czech Republic. In Slovakia, anti-fascist forces formed the Slovak National Council. There were strikes at a number of enterprises. As the Red Army approached, the Slovak resistance fighters prepared for an armed uprising. On August 29, 1944, at the request of the fascist government of Tiso, German troops entered Slovakia. In response, the people rebelled. In the liberated areas, the authorities

passed into the hands of the revolutionary national committees. To suppress the uprising, the Nazis concentrated large forces - about 30 thousand people. A number of massive air strikes were carried out. Fierce battles continued for two months, ending not in favor of the rebels.

Despite the defeat, the patriots did not lay down their arms. They went to the mountains and before the arrival of the Soviet troops fought a courageous fight against the invaders. At the same time, the partisan movement intensified in the Czech lands. At the beginning of May 1945, victorious armed uprisings took place in Prague and other cities of the Czech Republic with the support of Soviet troops. The revolutionary-democratic power of the people was established in the country.

The most massive liberation struggle unfolded in Yugoslavia, where individual actions against the invaders took place as early as the first days of May 1941, that is, a few weeks after the start of the occupation. The mass organized struggle began in

late June - early July 1941. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia was the leading force. Its Central Committee created the Military Committee headed by I. Broz Tito. An armed uprising engulfed the entire country. Liberated territories were formed, in which there were 40 cities, many hundreds of settlements. At the same time, the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia was created, which fought together with partisan detachments and maintained contact with the underground.

In the spring of 1944, the People's Liberation Army launched offensive operations throughout the country, which led to the liberation of even larger territories, on

which established the power of the National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia - the country's first people's government. In October, the northeastern regions of Yugoslavia and its capital Belgrade were liberated by the joint efforts of Soviet and Yugoslav troops. During fierce battles from July 1941 to May 1945 on the territory of Yugoslavia

about 450 thousand enemy soldiers and officers were destroyed, a large amount of military equipment and weapons were captured. At various times, the People's Liberation Army pinned down from 30 to 50 enemy divisions. In the four-year struggle for the freedom of the homeland, the peoples of Yugoslavia suffered considerable losses. Only those killed were estimated at 1,700 thousand people, which accounted for 11.2% of the country's population.

Occupied by Germany and Italy, Greece joined the resistance movement in the summer of 1941. Created in September, the National Liberation Front (EAM) launched a mass struggle against the invaders. Resistance organizations, led by the Central Committee of EAM, began to function in many enterprises, in urban areas, villages and remote mountain villages. Soon the People's Liberation Party was formed.

army

(ELAS), which later became the main armed force of the Greek people in his

fight against the invaders.

By the fall of 1943, ELAS detachments had liberated one third of the country's territory. It laid the foundations of people's democratic power, created people's councils, police agencies, and elected courts. In April 1944, elections were held for the National Council, the highest legislative body. By this time, the number of ELAS exceeded

130 thousand people, and in October its fighters liberated the entire mainland of Greece from the Nazis.

The liberation struggle was also waged in Albania, which had been occupied by Italian troops as early as April 1939 and incorporated into Italy.

In the spring of 1942 in the mountains

appeared

the first partisan detachments that fought successfully against the Italian fascists. As a result, national liberation councils began to function in some localities. After the German troops entered Albania in the summer of 1943, a regular National Liberation Army

(NOAA) was created in the country. The decisive factor contributing to the success of the patriotic forces was the victory of the Red Army in the Balkan direction. Using this situation, in September 1944, NOAA troops liberated a number of large cities in Albania, and on November 29, the liberation of the entire country was completed.

Thus, practically on the territory of all European countries occupied by the Nazis, a resistance movement was deployed, which diverted significant forces and harmed the invaders. By the beginning of 1944, it became clear

What

Germany and her allies are doomed to defeat, and then the time has come for England and the United States to throw their main forces into battle

and open a second front in Europe in order to once again show the whole world their role in World War II and achieve other extremely

important

goals.

Behind the scenes of the war

World War II and part of it, the Great Patriotic War, were only the visible part of the huge iceberg of complex political relations that existed in the world in the late 1930s and early 1940s. A lot remained under water, which in its significance could significantly affect the entire course of history of that period and which depended little directly on A. Hitler and JV Stalin. It is almost impossible to understand the complex

interweaving of political intrigues of such a high level, but you can look behind the scenes of the war from the corner of your eye and, perhaps, see

there

something interesting.

It turns out that there are other factors that sometimes play an even more significant role in the question of victory or defeat of a country or a group of countries than the means of armed struggle. These factors are political and economic in nature and directly

affect the interests not only of the belligerents, but also mainly of third countries. It is not in vain that when investigating any criminal case, investigators first of all ask the question: to whom was it beneficial?

Why not apply this to the study of the causes of war? Perhaps the answer to it will become the answer to the main question: why Germany, which had the bitter experience of the First World War on two fronts, in 1941 again decided to take the same step and, without putting an end to opponents in the west, went to war with the Soviet Union?

In this case, it is only clear that something higher dominated ordinary logic and mathematical calculations - economics and politics.

Any person, waking up in the morning, first of all thinks about daily food. Only after satisfying hunger and thirst, he can engage in other matters, including those of a political nature. Politics is based on the struggle for power. Power is, first of all, the right to distribute material values: territories, markets, sources of raw materials, means of production ... a piece of daily bread and a sip of water. The change of power is the redistribution of wealth.

At the beginning of the 20th century, when international economic relations developed and international banking capital appeared, the struggle for power went far beyond the boundaries of one single state. The insatiability of capital intensified the struggle for sources of raw materials and markets for finished products, which by that time were already in the main

distributed. Their shortage led to acute economic crises and, as a result, a decrease in profits and ruin. All capitalist states were subject to this. Only the Soviet Union, due to its political isolation, despite on existing international economic relations, to a certain extent retained its independence.

Of the states of Western Europe, Great Britain, the level of development of production in which was very high, especially suffered from a lack of sources of raw materials and markets for finished products. The rate on the markets of economically backward colonies did not justify itself. New powerful consumers were needed, capable of paying big money for the finished product.

In the second quarter of the 20th century, of all European countries, two countries, Germany and the USSR, had the highest dynamics of economic development. But the plans of the leaders of these countries exceeded their economic possibilities, and personal ambitions did not allow them to admit it. As a result, the dictatorship of A. Hitler was established in Germany, and the dictatorship of I. V. Stalin in the USSR. At the same time, each of the dictators, carrying out their country development program, is very little regard for the opinion of the international community, which, speaking about human values, did not refuse their daily bread.

It has long been practiced such a way to meet their needs, as the use of force. At first these were ordinary fights, later the clashes grew to

the scale of the war. Wars between the two states have become commonplace for thousands of years. In the 20th century, groups of states began to fight among themselves and wars acquired a global character. But the goal of these wars remained the same - the struggle for sources of raw materials and

sales markets, and among a coalition of states, some is always the main one. He gets the richest share of the captured

wealth, he retains the right to distribute the rest of the booty among his associates. In both the First and Second

World Wars, this state was Great Britain.

But an even higher degree of international relations is that which allows one of the countries at the beginning of the battle between two coalitions of states, remaining on the sidelines, to turn into the largest international

supplier of goods and borrower

capital.

Such a position always promises security, the rapid development of its own production forces and super profits. Since the beginning of the Second World War, in relation to everything that happened in Europe, this position was taken by the United States of America. The entry of the United States into the European war in August 1944, when no one doubted the victory of the Allies, was another deliberate move on the path to economic world

domination. After the end of World War II, the United States became the richest state in the world, for many decades gained access to the best sources of raw materials and markets for manufactured products.

Now we will try to answer the main question: why did A. Hitler, despite the bitter experience of the First World War and the incompleteness of the armed clash with Great Britain, in 1941 decide to start a war with the USSR and fight on two fronts? Was he really so stupid that he did not take into account the experience of the First World War, which ended in the defeat of Germany?

There is only one answer: it was beneficial to someone, and first of all to Great Britain and the United States of America standing behind it, and more precisely, to international capital, which is in constant search for new sources of raw materials and markets for its products. In this regard, the incapacitation of the two most dynamically developing states, the next redivision of the world, the clearing of the European space for its own tasks is the result

of the largest political struggle for power that one can only dream of. And in the USA and Great Britain there were a sufficient number of such dreamers.

Evidence of this can serve as a letter, which on the afternoon of June 21, 1941, A. Hitler from his new underground Wolfschanze headquarters, located in a gloomy forest near

Rastenburg in East Prussia, and dictated by B. Mussolini.

It is known that A. Hitler understood the danger of a war on two fronts and sought an alliance with the West. Quite a lot has been written about the diplomatic games of that period, but even more

hidden in secret archives and is unlikely to become public anytime soon. Secrets of the diplomatic intrigues of

governments, as a rule, have no statute of limitations. But the historical facts are there. One of them is the fact that

the Germans surrounded the British Expeditionary Forces and the French armies in the Dunkirk area in May 1940. Then A.

Hitler, who was looking for an alliance with England, actually pardoned her troops, stopped his tank armadas by order and allowed the enemy to be evacuated by sea.

But W. Churchill did not accept this proposal. England and the USA, international capital needed a big war in Europe. Therefore, on June 4, 1940, when virtually all the British were safely evacuated from the continent, the Prime Minister arrived in the House of Commons and delivered his famous speech:

"Even if huge parts of Europe and many old and famous states fall or fall into the clutches of the Gestapo and the entire odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we will not relax or waver. We will fight in France, we will fight on the seas and oceans, we will fight with increasing confidence and increasing power in the air, we will defend our island, whatever the cost; we will fight on the coast, we will fight in the landing areas, we will fight in the fields and on

streets; we will fight in the mountains; we will never surrender ... our empire across the seas, armed and guarded

by the British fleet, will fight until will

God's New World (USA. - Auth.) with all its might and might will not come forward to salvation

and the liberation of the Old World (England. - Auth.) ".

Comments on the political union of Great Britain and the United States are superfluous.

At the same time, the West was well aware of A. Hitler's Eastern plans. Even in his book Mein Kampf, he wrote: "So, now we, the National Socialists, are returning to what was six centuries ago. We stop the endless

German movement to the south

And

west of Europe and turn our eyes towards the lands in the east... When we talk today about acquiring new lands and new space in Europe, we first of all think about Russia and the border states subordinate to it. It seems as if fate

itself is showing us the way there... This colossal empire in the east is ripe for its liquidation, and the end of Jewish

domination in Russia will be the end of Russia as a state."

It only remained to wait for the start of this war, to allow Germany and the USSR to bleed themselves in bloody battles and thus reap political and economic benefits with a minimum expenditure of effort and resources.

This once again confirms that the war between the USSR and Germany of 1941-1945 was prepared and provoked by third forces, which were headed by international capitalism, whose roots grew from the USA and Great Britain, and whose branches were in

various other countries of the world. The war was waged with the aim of redistributing the world, access to sources

raw materials and markets.

But the West needed not a short war in Europe, but a long war of attrition. The devastating summer defeats of the Red Army in 1941 seriously frightened politicians in London and Washington. There was a fear that either Germany would achieve the goals of the war, or the Soviet government would negotiate with Berlin.

This threatened the appearance on the map of Europe of a new super-powerful empire that would be able to dictate its terms to the whole world. This development of events by international capital

Not

planned and not allowed. Therefore, the idea of material assistance to the Soviet Union immediately appeared, which was expressed in the form of lend-lease and promises to open a second front in Europe.

Of course, material assistance at that time was important for the Soviet Union, which was forced to rebuild its economy and temporarily reduce production.

Equipment and weapons also entered the active army under Lend-Lease from

allies in the anti-Hitler coalition - the United States, Great Britain and Canada. In total, during the war, starting from November 1941, they received 151.7 thousand small arms, 9.4 thousand guns and mortars, 11.9 thousand tanks and self-

propelled guns, 5 thousand armored personnel carriers, 18.3 thousand aircraft, 520 ships. The share of lend-lease in the total amount of equipment and weapons was: small arms - 0.8%, guns and mortars - 1.8%, tanks and self-

propelled guns - about 12.1%, aircraft - about 15%, cars

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32.8%. For the USSR, this was a significant help.

But one must understand the true goals of these supplies and remember that the main assistance to the USSR began to arrive only in 1943 and 1944, when the Red Army had already demonstrated its ability to resist the enemy. For the funds received from the allies, the Soviet Union had to pay in gold far from the lowest prices, the supply of a large amount of equipment, weapons and food to the USSR allowed Western countries to get rid of obsolete samples and expired stocks, and most importantly, to develop their own production based on the latest technologies.

Let us recall the history of the Allies' opening of a second front in Europe. The bleeding Soviet Union has been trying to open this front since 1941. But Great Britain, and then the United States, under any pretext, postponed the landing of their troops in France. But

They

actively involved in negotiations on the supply of military equipment to the USSR, of course, did not

for free.

So in the negotiations passed 1942, 1943. Soviet troops inflicted a crushing defeat on the Nazis near Stalingrad and Kursk ... But the second front is still open

Not

was.

“There are only 50 million people in Great Britain,” Churchill once told the Soviet ambassador. “Opening a second front will require a lot of human sacrifice. We cannot scatter our people so easily.

At the same time, for some reason, the British prime minister “forgot” not only about the multi-million colonies of Great Britain, but also about the US promise to participate in this operation with its armed forces.

And only on June 6, 1944, with the landing of 39 divisions, 12 separate brigades, with the support of almost 11 thousand combat aircraft, Operation Overlord began - the landing of allied troops in

Normandy, the long-awaited opening of a second front in Europe. And then it turned out that the Nazis in Normandy had much less strength than the allies expected, and their powerful defense of the coast, in many respects, was only the result of Goebbels's violent propaganda fantasies. But the allies did not seem to know this. A decisive battle for spheres of influence in the post-war world began.

The Allies preferred to rush slowly - the destructive potential of Germany on its Eastern Front had not yet been completely exhausted. In September 1944, another "miracle" happened - for some reason, the successful Allied offensive stopped. The German generals could not explain what had happened. Allied generals, including Eisenhower, argued for a long time after the war why this happened, but never gave an intelligible answer. It was said that Montgomery proposed, having gathered strength into a fist, to deliver a powerful blow, to break through to the Ruhr, depriving the Germans of their main arsenal, to open the way to Berlin. Eisenhower rejected this offer and decided to attack on a broad front. But he could not financially support such an offensive, since his armies were far away from their rear, and the Americans could not advance without stew, whiskey and chocolate. The delay in the Allied offensive allowed the Germans to bring up fresh reserves and strengthen their defenses.

Finally, the offensive of the Allied forces began on September 17 with the landing of two American and one British airborne divisions in the rear of the enemy troops. But the effectiveness of the landing was low. The paratroopers "by mistake" landed in the location of two SS Panzer divisions, the presence of which they did not know. Operation

failed. After ten days of fierce fighting, their troops retreated from Arnhem. Of the British 1st Airborne Division, dropped near the city, as a result of the fighting, out of 9 thousand people, only 2163 remained. This failure made it possible for

Eisenhower to prove the correctness of his decision, and for the British and American aviation to continue the destruction of the most important economic objects of Germany. The Nazis, on the other hand, received a new opportunity to strengthen their resistance on the Eastern Front and prolong the resistance of the Red Army.

But all this is only the author's reasoning, which has indirect confirmation, but has not been proven and, apparently, will never be proven by historians. But something else is well known - fascism was defeated by the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition, the leading place

which was occupied by the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the USA. And although the contribution of each of these countries in achieving Victory is still debated, but their joint role in this great fact is undeniable.

In the light of the complex political game in the world and in Germany itself, in the last years of his life, A. Hitler was almost constantly under the threat of physical destruction as a result of various conspiracies that were woven around him. I have already written about the military conspirators of the beginning of World War II above. But in subsequent years, the threat of violent death at the hands of the conspirators constantly hovered over the Fuhrer, negatively affecting his health and mental state.

Constant terrorist acts incapacitated the closest associates of A. Hitler.

On the morning of May 29, 1942, Himmler's deputy, 38-year-old SD chief Heydrich, was killed.



When he was driving an open Mercedes in the morning from his country villa to the Prague palace, an English-made bomb was thrown at him. She smashed the car to smithereens and crushed Heydrich's spine. The assassination attempt was the work of two Czechs - soldiers of the Free Czechoslovak Army, formed in England, who were dropped into Czechoslovakia shortly before the assassination attempt from an English aircraft.

Heydrich died of his wounds on 4 June. After that, the Germans organized a brutal massacre of peaceful Czechs. According to one of the reports of the Gestapo, 1331 were immediately shot

people, including 201 women. Then the terrorists themselves, who, together with 120 Czech Resistance fighters, were hiding in the church of Karl Barramus, were captured during the siege and killed by the SS. Another three thousand Jews were evicted from the "privileged" ghetto in Tiresienstadt and sent east for extermination. On the day of the assassination attempt on Heydrich, Goebbels ordered the arrest of 500 Jews from the few remaining in Berlin, and on the day of Heydrich's death, 152 of them were subjected to execution.

But the worst atrocity on the occasion of the assassination attempt on Heydrich was organized by the Germans in the small Czech village of Lidice on June 2, 1942. The SS surrounded this village and locked all its inhabitants in a barn. The next day they took people out of the barn in groups of 10 and shot them. In total, 172 men and teenagers over 16 were shot that day. 195 women were sent to the Ravensbrück concentration camp, where more than 50 of them died. 90 children were sent to the Gnesenau concentration camp, where many had their last names changed and sent to Germany, the rest disappeared without a trace.

Lidice itself was burned and virtually disappeared from the face of the earth. Such was the price of killing Heydrich.

In November 1942, at a secret meeting in the forest near Smolensk, Gördler, the political leader of the German resistance, turned to Field Marshal Kluge, commander of Army Group Center, with a request to play an active role in the elimination of A. Hitler. Kluge at first agreed, but then he chickened out and wrote a letter to General Beck in Berlin to

he was not counted in this case.

A few weeks later, the conspirators turned to General Paulus, whose army was surrounded at Stalingrad, with a request to lead the resistance to A. Hitler.

The letter, written by General Beck, was delivered to Stalingrad by plane. But Paulus sent a stream of loyalty telegrams from Stalingrad to the Fuhrer, for which he was awarded the title of Field Marshal. He came to his senses only after he was taken to Moscow as a prisoner of war, but the moment was lost.

Then the conspirators pinned their hopes on Kluge and Manstein, who, after the defeat of the 6th Army near Stalingrad, flew to Rastenburg to demand that the Fuhrer transfer command of all armies on the Soviet-German front to them. In case of success

this demarche was supposed to serve as a signal for a military coup in Berlin. But the conspirators again miscalculated. Two field marshals, having arrived at Hitler's headquarters, did not think of anything better than to assure the Fuhrer of their boundless devotion.

- We've been betrayed. We were left alone! - General Beck declared bitterly, and it became obvious to his friends that one should not expect help from the generals. In desperation, they turned to the last bearer of military power in Germany - the commander of the reserve army, General Fromm. These troops could hardly be considered a military force. They included recruits undergoing military training and units of elderly soldiers guarding rear facilities. However, according to the plan of the conspirators,

these

forces were sufficient to suddenly occupy Berlin and other major German cities after the assassination of Hitler. But the conspirators did not have a single plan of action. The prevailing view was that it was necessary to negotiate peace with Britain and the United States. The conspirators were even able to reach the leadership of the allies through A. Dulles, who was operating in Switzerland. But A. Dulles, apparently on the recommendation of London and Washington, avoided further contacts with representatives of the German resistance.

In February 1943, G rdler informed Jakob Wallenberg in Stockholm that they had prepared a plan for a coup d' tat scheduled for March of that year. The operation was codenamed "Flash". The plan for this operation was developed by the head of the general directorate

of the German ground forces, General F. Olbricht, and the chief of staff of Army Group Center von Tresckow. Fromm himself, like Kluge, by that time was completely disillusioned with A. Hitler, but was not considered a reliable enough person to initiate him into

conspiracy plan.

In early March, the conspirators gathered for the last meeting in Smolensk, at the headquarters of Army Group Center. Abwehr chief Admiral Canaris arrived there under the guise of holding a meeting with Wehrmacht intelligence officers. General E. Lahousen, a former intelligence officer of the Austrian army, brought with him several German-made time bombs intended to sabotage the Fuhrer.

The bombs passed the test, as a result of which it was concluded that these samples do not meet the requirements put forward. All of them made a low hissing sound before the explosion, which could alert the guards and those present. It was decided to use British-made bombs, several copies of which were available.

V

at the disposal of the Abwehr. The conspirators planned to somehow lure A. Hitler on

meeting at the headquarters of the Army Group "Center" and there to end it. The assassination of Hitler was supposed to be a signal for the actions of the conspirators who were in Berlin.

It was not easy to persuade Hitler to go to Smolensk. By that time, he already thoroughly distrusted some of his generals and was reluctant to leave German territory. Nevertheless, it was possible to obtain his consent to visit the headquarters of Army Group Center on March 13, 1943.

Meanwhile, Tresckow began to vigorously persuade von Kluge to take over the leadership of the operation to eliminate the Fuhrer. Moreover, he persuaded the head of the security forces of the headquarters of Army Group Center, Lieutenant Colonel Baron

von Bezelager, to use troops subordinate to him to assassinate Hitler. (He was later executed by the Nazis.)

But in

March 1943, von Kluge had doubts.

Tresckow and Schlabrendorf decided to lead the conspiracy themselves. They decided to plant a bomb on Hitler's plane before the return flight and write everything off as an accident.

Hitler arrived in Smolensk on March 13, as planned. Twice that day the conspiring officers approached Treskov with a proposal to detonate the bomb immediately. But he hesitated, fearing that the explosion would also kill the generals who participated in the conspiracy, who were supposed to ensure the seizure of power on the ground after the death of the Fuhrer.

The problem remained unresolved - how to carry explosives into the Fuhrer's plane. It was packed in cognac bags, and Tresckow asked one of Hitler's escorts to pass this "cognac" to his friend in Berlin. The officer agreed. (He was later executed by the Nazis.) At the airfield, Schlabrendorf set off the detonation mechanism and handed the

bundle to the aircraft. After that, he called Berlin and warned that the "Flash"

started.

Hitler's plane took off and headed for Berlin. According to the plan of the conspirators, an explosion was to follow in 15 minutes. But there was no news. Two hours later, a message was received that the Fuhrer's plane had landed safely in Rastenburg.

The conspirators were on the verge of failure. They knew that if a bomb was discovered, everything would immediately point to their involvement in the conspiracy. Therefore, Schlabrendorf, gathering all his courage,

immediately called the officer in Berlin through whom he passed the "cognac", and asked if he had delivered the parcel to the addressee. The officer replied that he had not yet. Then Schlabrendorf announced that he intended to arrive

in Berlin tomorrow and meet with his comrade. He did just that, exchanging the bomb for ordinary cognac. Already on the way back on the train, Schlabrendorf understood the reason for the failure - the striker pierced the bomb primer, but the detonator did not work.

But the conspirators did not abandon the plan to kill the Fuhrer. The case turned up very soon. On March 21, Hitler, accompanied by Göring, Himmler and Keitel, was to attend a memorial ceremony for fallen heroes in Berlin. There was an opportunity in one fell swoop to deal not only with the Fuhrer, but also with his inner circle. The action was ordered to be carried out by the head of intelligence at Kluge's headquarters, Colonel Baron von Gersdorff, who agreed to sacrifice himself for a lofty goal. It was decided to carry out the action during the inspection by the Fuhrer and his companions of an exhibition of captured Soviet equipment,

specially deployed for this purpose.

The bomb explosion was supposed to follow 15-20 minutes after the mechanism was launched. Everything was going well, and Gersdorff was already ready to launch the "infernal machine". But in this

time, the adjutant reported that the inspection of captured equipment by the decision of the Fuhrer would be reduced to 10 minutes. The planned explosion had to be cancelled.

The conspirators were clearly out of luck. In the autumn of 1942, the Munich businessman Schmidhuber was arrested, who, on the instructions of the Abwehr, was smuggling currency into Switzerland for the Jewish refugees who were there. The Gestapo, which had long rivaled the Abwehr, took up the case. Canaris was powerless to help

his agent, who began to testify in retaliation. A series of arrests and resignations followed, and then the liquidation of the

Abwehr itself on February 18, 1944. In the person of Admiral Canaris, the conspirators lost a very active "bayonet", and Himmler's power in Germany and the Wehrmacht only increased.

Attempts to assassinate Hitler continued. In November 1943, another attempt was made to blow up the Fuhrer while inspecting new models of uniforms. Captain A. von dem Bussche, who played the role of a dummy, was supposed to activate an explosive device hidden under his clothes at the moment the Fuhrer approached. But on the eve of the show, an Allied bomb dropped during an air raid destroyed all the samples of clothing, and the show did not take place.

A new demonstration of models was scheduled for February 11, 1944. This time, G. von Kleist, the son of the famous military leader and prominent participant in the conspiracy E. von Kleist, agreed to the role of a suicide bomber. But due to an air raid, Hitler did not come to the demonstration, and the explosion was once again canceled.

After all the failures that had taken place, the conspirators came to the conclusion that it was impossible to rely on chance, but to focus on one of two planned

meetings that A. Hitler held daily in Rastenburg with the highest ranks of the Wehrmacht. On December 26, 1943, Colonel Count K. von Stauffenberg, who was in a conspiracy and went to the Fuhrer's residence with a bomb in his briefcase, was invited to one of these meetings. But it was on that day that A. Hitler canceled the meeting and left to celebrate Christmas in Obersalzberg with Eva Braun.

But Stauffenberg did not abandon his lofty mission. He was a true aristocrat, a military man and a man of honor, who valued his convictions and this word above his own life. At the age of 19, he began serving in the army, then graduated from the military academy in Berlin, worked in the general staff. At the same time, Stauffenberg has always been an opponent of the Nazi regime and the war into which Hitler dragged the country in 1939. At the same time, sent to the front, Stauffenberg, as a staff officer in the 6th Panzer Division of General Göpner, participated in the Polish and French campaigns. In June 1940, he was transferred to the headquarters of the High Command of the Ground Forces (OKH). Since the beginning of the war with the Soviet Union

Stauffenberg was mainly located on Soviet territory, where he helped form "volunteer" units from prisoners of war. It was at this time, not being a supporter of the Soviet system, Stauffenberg finally understood the anti-human essence of fascism and made friends with some conspirators.

After the disaster at Stalingrad, Stauffenberg asked to be sent to the front and was appointed chief of staff of the 10th Panzer Division, located in Tunisia. On April 7, 1943, Stauffenberg's car hit a mine, he lost his left eye, right hand, two fingers of his left hand and was wounded in the head and knee. Any other person on his

place would have resigned, but Stauffenberg decided to stay in the ranks in order to complete the sacred mission. By the end of September 1943, he received the rank of lieutenant colonel and returned to Berlin to the post of chief of staff of one of the land departments.

Wehrmacht troops. At the same time, he began to carefully prepare an assassination attempt on Hitler.

Soon a large group of conspirators formed around the active aristocrat von Stauffenberg. It included General Beck, his chief, General Olbricht, the head of the organizational department of the ground forces, General Stiff, the first quartermaster general of the headquarters of the ground forces, General Eduard Wagner, the head of the communications service at the supreme high command, General Erich Felgiebel, the head of the artillery and technical department, General Fritz Linderman, head of the Berlin commandant's office, General Paul von Hase, head of the department of foreign armies, Colonel Baron von Rönne, chief of staff of the department of foreign armies, captain Count von Matyushka

And

other.

The conspirators wanted to have one of the current field marshals in their ranks, but this turned out to be a difficult task. Field Marshal von Witzleben, who was one of the first to join the conspiracy and was scheduled to take the post of commander in chief of the armed forces, was in the reserve and had no troops under his command. The commander of the troops in the west, Field Marshal von Rundstedt, did not want to violate the oath given to the Führer. So did Field Marshal von Manstein. Quite unexpectedly, Field Marshal Rommel agreed to join the conspiracy, but he did not enjoy the confidence of many conspirators. Therefore, he was informed that the opposition only intended to arrest the Führer and demand that he publicly renounce power. Rommel approved of the idea, but he strongly objected to the assassination of Hitler.

The main idea of the conspiracy was, after the elimination of Hitler, the conclusion of a truce with the Western allies. Some of the conspirators believed that after that the Allied armies would join the Wehrmacht troops conducting military operations in the east, in order not to

to allow the spread of the Bolshevik contagion in Europe. But the other part, including

Stauffenberg himself, was more guided by the fact that after the assassination of Hitler it would be possible to negotiate with the Soviet Union, since I.V. Stalin repeated many times that his country was waging war not with the German people, but with the Nazis. In doing so, they referred to

a declaration adopted after the meeting of Churchill and Roosevelt in Casablanca on January 24, 1943, declaring the conduct of the war until the unconditional surrender of Germany. The Soviet Union acceded to this declaration only in October 1943, which gave the conspirators hope that it would be possible to negotiate with Moscow, bypassing London and Washington.

The plan of the conspiracy was codenamed "Valkyrie" (according to Scandinavian-Germanic mythology, a maiden hovering over the battlefield in the choice of those who are destined to die). After the assassination attempt on Hitler in Rastenburg, troops loyal to the conspirators were to occupy key points in Berlin, the Reich Chancellery,

ministries, SS and Gestapo headquarters. It was decided to arrest the generals who did not support the conspirators.

But time passed and events unfolded that did not play in favor of the conspirators. By June 1944, the Gestapo, constantly making arrests, crept up to the core of the conspiracy. Back in the spring, Himmler warned the disgraced

Canaris that he knew about the conspiracy and that his

people are watching many suspicious Wehrmacht generals and officers. On July 4, Rome was occupied by the Allies. On July 6, the landing of the Allied armies began in the north of France, and finally a second front was opened in Europe.

A. Hitler, in his characteristic manner, demanded the immediate liquidation of the bridgehead captured by the Allied forces. But Rundstedt and Rommel were forced to admit that they were unable to do so. Hitler was shocked by the news that fell on him. Rommel

proposed to withdraw troops, and above all tanks, beyond the range of Allied naval artillery fire in order to organize defense in depth and try to stop the enemy advance there. But Hitler did not want to listen to anything. Instead, he launched into a lengthy speech about the resilience of the German soldier and the power of the V-1, which will force

English

stop the offensive in France.

Rommel, after listening to the Fuhrer's confused speech, decided to talk about the need for negotiations with the enemy. But Hitler replied that negotiations were outside the competence of the field marshal, whose main task was to fight. Further conversations on this topic became meaningless.

At that time, A. Hitler was in a bunker in Marzheval. German troops fired on the territory of England with V-1 rockets. One of these missiles, having lost its course, unexpectedly fell on the Fuhrer's bunker on June 17. And although there were no casualties, Hitler hurried to leave

dangerous

place and moved to his residence in Berchtesgaden.

On June 23, the Belarusian strategic offensive operation began on the Soviet-German front. The German troops of the Army Group Center defending there were on the verge of defeat. On June 29, Rundstedt and Rommel again proposed to the Fuhrer that he realistically assess the situation and try to end the war. But this time, too, Hitler remained deaf to the words of his field marshals. Two days later, Rundstedt was suspended from

command of the Western Front and replaced by Field Marshal von Kluge.

There is evidence that the reason for Rundstedt's resignation was his telephone conversation with Keitel, who tried to find out what he should do after the strike of four tank

SS divisions against the British troops did not reach the intended goal?

"We need to make peace immediately!" Rundstedt blurted out angrily.

This conversation immediately became known to Hitler, who was just talking with Kluge, who had returned from vacation after an illness. He was immediately appointed to replace Rundstedt, who had not lived up to expectations.

On July 15, Rommel sent a telegram to Hitler by teletype, in which he said: "The troops everywhere are fighting heroically. But the unequal struggle is coming to an end. I ask you

draw the necessary conclusions immediately. As commander of the army group, I consider it my duty to state this with all clarity.

On July 17, Rommel, returning to his headquarters from Normandy by car, was seriously injured as a result of a shelling from an Allied aircraft. So the conspirators lost

another active "bayonet" - Field Marshal General, capable of decisive action.

The Allied landing in Normandy was also a big nuisance for Stauffenberg, who believed that it would not happen in 1944 or that during the landing the Anglo-American troops would suffer such heavy losses that they would not be able to develop the offensive in depth. But his

hopes were not justified. After that, the conspirators Beck and Goerdler questioned the wisdom of the plot, deciding that killing Hitler would only hasten the collapse of Germany. But they were sure that under the threat of the spread of Bolshevism to the West, the Allies would still negotiate with the new government of Germany and that, even with the occupation of the country, it would be possible to avoid its destruction and huge losses among the German people. But the young conspirators, led by Stauffenberg, were of a different opinion. Based on the reports of General Treskov, who became the chief of staff of the 2nd Army on the Soviet-German front, they understood the inevitability of the collapse

this

front and insisted on the elimination of Hitler before the Soviet troops reached the western borders of the USSR.

"We must show the whole world and future generations that the German resistance fighters dared to take a decisive step, risking their own lives," the general said. "The action itself is important. Everything else compared to this goal

nothing is  
costs.

The conspirators decided to act immediately. They were also in a hurry because in Germany and the countries occupied by it, at that time, the communist underground, led from Moscow, was raising its head ever higher. And the more strength this underground gained, the less chance the conspirators had to come to an agreement with Moscow.

But the conspirators went further in their actions. In June, against the advice of Goerdler and other old generals, they decided to make contact with the communists. Stauffenberg himself decided to take this step only in order to know more about the plans of other opponents of the fascist system and, if possible, use their forces to expand the base of the uprising after the overthrow of Hitler. He even decided to meet with the leaders of the communist underground, which took place on June 22 in Berlin. It turned out that the communists knew a lot about the conspiracy against Hitler, but they would like to know more and meet with major military leaders. Stauffenberg himself did not go to the meeting, instructing Reichven to represent him. But the Gestapo became aware of this meeting, and all its participants were arrested and later executed.

At the end of June 1944, Stauffenberg was promoted to colonel and appointed chief of staff of the reserve army commander, which allowed him to issue orders from

the name of the commander and opened access to Hitler's residence. But by this time, the conspirators realized that at the same time as the Fuhrer they would also have to destroy Goering and Himmler, who had real military power and could prevent the seizure of power.

All this was going to be done by Staufenberg during the next meeting with the Fuhrer.

1] July he was summoned to the Obersalzberg to report to the Fuhrer. He took the bomb with him. But Hitler was absent from the meeting that day. The terrorist act was

decided not to produce.

The next time Stauffenberg was summoned to report to the Fuhrer on July 15. This time, the conspirators were so sure of the success of the action that they decided to transmit the Valkyrie signal two hours before the start of the meeting. At this signal, tanks from the tank school located in Krampnitz were to start marching towards Berlin. At 11 o'clock (the time the meeting began), the Valkyrie signal was transmitted to some parts of the Berlin garrison.

Staufenberg, with a briefcase in his hand, in which the bomb lay, arrived at the Fuhrer's conference room at 13 o'clock, made a report, and then briefly left to inform his accomplices by phone that everything was ready for the attack. But when he returned to the hall, Hitler was no longer found there. He immediately called Olbricht, and the general ordered the troops to quietly return to their places of permanent deployment.

Successive unsuccessful assassination attempts caused vacillations in the ranks of

conspirators. Some feared the stubbornness of the allies, others feared the disclosure of the conspiracy by Hitler's supporters. Nevertheless, the majority insisted on the completion of the plan, seeing this as the last opportunity to save Germany.

On July 20, Stauffenberg was again summoned to Wolfsschanz to report to Hitler. Leaving there, he phoned the other leaders of the conspiracy and asked everyone to be ready. All participants were informed that July 20 was the day of Operation Valkyrie. Stauffenberg was on his way to the meeting with an English time bomb in his briefcase. He himself was full

determination to see it through to the end.

The very picture of the assassination attempt on Hitler on July 20, 1944 is well described by many authors, so I will not waste time on a census of what is already known. Something else is important —

Stauffenberg blew up the bomb, but failed to kill the Fuhrer. Stauffenberg managed to safely leave the Wolfsschanze and fly to Berlin. Three hours later, he learned that the Valkyrie still hadn't taken off. Other participants in the conspiracy stubbornly waited for something.

A. Hitler was not killed. Unconsciously moving the briefcase to the far end of the sturdy oak table saved his life. Hitler was badly shell-shocked, but slightly wounded. His hair was singed, burns appeared on his legs, his right arm was bruised and temporarily paralyzed, a fallen beam left an abrasion on his back. Many of those present at the meeting were killed or seriously injured.

Approximately two hours after the explosion, the picture began to clear up. They remembered Stauffenberg, which gave reason to suspect him of organizing the explosion. Himmler immediately gave the order to arrest the colonel after his plane landed in Berlin, but this signal was delayed by the will of the radio operator.

A. Hitler behaved surprisingly calmly that day. At 4 pm he met Mussolini, who flew to Wolfsschanz, and even showed him the ruins



the conference room where the explosion took place. But Mussolini was horrified, not understanding how such could have happened at the Fuhrer's headquarters.

"It only says that my destiny is to follow the chosen path to the end and achieve the goal," said the Fuhrer. "Having escaped death, I am more convinced than ever that the great cause I serve is not afraid of any danger.

Stauffenberg's plot failed. The Berlin conspirator generals, taught by previous experience, this time were in no hurry to start acting according to the Valkyrie plan. When Stauffenberg got off the plane at Rangsdorf at 1545, nothing was done. Radio stations, telephone, telegraph remained uncaptured. The two main military leaders of the conspiracy, Generals Beck and Witzleben, never showed up. Stauffenberg

on

decided to give the signal for action at his own peril and risk. Signal "Valkyrie" began to transmit to the troops. The text said that Hitler had been killed and that power in Germany had passed into the hands of other people.

Meanwhile, General Fromm tried to contact Keitel through the government line and found out that Hitler was alive. After that, Fromm immediately moved away from

conspiracy. Olbricht, without saying a word, slipped out of the building. But the arrived Stauffenberg insisted on the immediate start of the operation. He called his relative in France and got him to start arresting officers and generals of the SSi SD troops.

When Stauffenberg returned to his office, the SS men were waiting for him to arrest him. Stauffenberg ordered their arrest. Then they called the commander of the selective security battalion "Grosdeutschland" and ordered him to immediately arrive at the commandant's office. The commander of this battalion, Major Otto Remer, was a warrior to the marrow of his bones, who was not interested in politics. His courage was not in doubt - from Hitler he recently received the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves. Having received the order, Remer raised the battalion on alert and went to carry out the combat mission assigned to him.

But at this time Hitler called Goebbels for the first time in Berlin, reported the assassination attempt and

asked to keep order in the capital. Goebbels immediately invited Roemer, who was just about to arrest the Minister

of Propaganda on the orders of the conspirators. Goebbels was very resourceful. He told the major that Hitler was alive and that the generals had rebelled against the Fuhrer. Remer did not believe Goebbels, but he put him on the phone with the Fuhrer. The Fuhrer promoted the major to colonel and ordered him, following Goebbels' commands, to crush the uprising in Berlin. The zealous newly minted colonel immediately began to carry out the new command.

It soon became known that the Fuhrer had replaced the commandant of Berlin, and SS units were preparing to storm the Bendlershtasse. A massive transition of the conspirators to the side of the Fuhrer began. A group of officers broke into the building on the Bendlershtasse. Stauffenberg was wounded in the leg, Generals Beck, Göpner, Olbricht and others were arrested on Fromm's orders. Four conspirators, including Olbricht and Stauffenberg, were immediately shot on the orders of Fromm. General Beck tried to shoot himself, but he did not succeed, and his

a sergeant killed him with a shot in the neck. General Hoepner refused to follow Beck's example and was sent to the Moabite prison.

At eleven o'clock at night, O. Skorzeny arrived at Bendlerstrasse with a group of SS men and stopped further executions. He ordered the rest of the conspirators to be handcuffed and sent to the Gestapo prison on Prinz-Albrechtstrasse and began to seize documents that they did not have time to destroy.

It remains unclear: why did the conspirators not immediately arrest Goebbels? Why weren't other troops involved in the capture of key objects in Berlin? Why didn't they cut Berlin's connection with Hitler's headquarters? Why didn't they make a statement to the people and the troops?

At 18.30 Goebbels made a statement over the powerful Germania radio station. There was a report of a failed assassination attempt on Hitler.

When Field Marshal von Witzleben, in full military uniform, arrived at the headquarters of the conspirators at about 20 pm, playing with a baton, to take up the duties of the new commander-in-chief of the Wehrmacht, it became clear that the plot had failed. The field marshal struggled a little and soon left the building on Bendlerstrasse, no longer considering himself a participant in the conspiracy.

At 9 pm A. Hitler himself addressed the German people. He said: "My German comrades! I stand before you today, firstly, so that you can hear my voice and make sure that I am alive and well, and secondly, so that you can

learn about a crime unprecedented in German history.

A very small group of ambitious, irresponsible, and at the same time cruel and stupid officers concocted a plot to destroy me and, along with me, the headquarters of the Wehrmacht's supreme command.

The bomb planted by Colonel Count von Stauffenberg exploded two meters to my right. The explosion injured my faithful and devoted companions, one of whom died. I myself was completely unharmed, except for a few minor scratches, burns and abrasions. I regard this as a confirmation of the mission entrusted to me by providence ... "

After the assassination attempt on July 20, a wave of arrests swept through the rear and at the fronts. Those arrested were subjected to terrible torture, and then tried by courts-martial. Most were sentenced to death. Sentences were mostly carried out by slowly strangling the victims with piano strings slung over hooks for hanging meat carcasses. Thousands of relatives and friends of the accused were sent to concentration camps.

The first public trial of the conspirators took place at the People's Court in Berlin on August 8, 1944. Field Marshal von Witzleben, Generals Göpner, Striff and von Hase, as well as a number of junior officers appeared on it. Goebbels ordered to film on film strip the whole process up to the last minute. All the accused went through the cellars

Gestapo and were morally broken, looked terrible. Even the artificial jaw was taken away from Field Marshal Witzleben, the rest were deprived of ties, collars,

belts

and suspenders. The clothes were wrinkled and dirty, the defendants themselves were unshaven.

Despite all these tricks of the Gestapo, the defendants, who no longer doubted their future fate, behaved quite courageously. Some even found the strength to blame the Nazis for their crimes against the German people. There was, of course, no protection. The judges knew that on the eve of the trial, Hitler said: "All

hang like cattle.

This order was carried out. In the Plötzensee prison, eight convicts were driven into a small room, where eight hooks hung from the ceiling. Filmed on film cameras

the unfortunates were stripped to the waist, and then pulled up, throwing a loop of piano string over their necks, thrown over a hook. The convicts at

first hung freely in a noose, and then

as the noose tightened, they began to convulsively gasp for air. Their trousers slipped and fell to the floor, they fought in their death throes, and, finally, subsided.

The urgently developed film was sent to the Fuhrer on the same day so that he could enjoy the martyrdom of his enemies. Later, a film depicting the trial was shown at the Nuremberg trials, but the film of the execution of the conspirators could not be found.

The meetings of the People's Court in the case of the attempt on the Fuhrer went on throughout the autumn and winter of the coming 1945. But it seemed that fate itself decided to stop this business. On February 3, an American bomb fell on the building of the People's Court, killing Chief

Justice Freisler and destroying many of the incriminating documents. This allowed some conspirators to escape a cruel death.

Goerdler, whom the conspirators predicted to become chancellor, was sentenced to death on September 8, 1944, but the sentence was carried out only on February 2, 1945. Apparently, Himmler wanted to use his connections with the Allies for his own purposes. Count Friedrich von

Schulenburg, former ambassador to Moscow, was executed on November 10, 1944. Nor could General Fromm escape execution, who tried to save himself by arresting and executing on July 20 the main instigators of the putsch. He was arrested on the night of July 20, and shot on March 19,

1945. In total, according to some reports, the Gestapo arrested about 7 thousand

people, of whom 4980 were executed.

After the assassination attempt on Hitler, Admiral Canaris was also arrested. However, Keitel ensured that the Canaris case was not referred to the People's Court. Hitler, having learned about this, ordered the admiral to be tried by a special SS court. But this process has been delayed more than once. AND

only on April 9, 1945, just a month before the surrender of Germany, Canaris, his former assistant Colonel Oster and four other prisoners were put on trial

in the Flossenburg concentration camp. All of them were sentenced to death. However, there was no data on the execution of Canaris.

It was not until ten years later that witnesses testified that the admiral was

hanged in

day of sentencing.

General H. von Tresckow on the morning of July 21 went to say goodbye to his friend and assistant Schlabrendorf. "Now everyone will jump on us and throw mud at us," he said. - But

my convictions are unshakable: we did the right thing. Hitler is not only the sworn enemy of Germany, he is the sworn enemy of all mankind. In a few hours, I will stand before God, held accountable for my actions and omissions. I think that I can, with a clear conscience, justify everything that I did in the fight against Hitler ... "

At that time, Treskov rode to the front line, crawled into the neutral zone and pulled the safety pin from a hand grenade. The explosion took his head off.

Five days later, the quartermaster general of the ground forces, General Wagner, took his own life. On August 17, Field Marshal von Kluge poisoned himself. On October 14, 1944, Field Marshal Rommel died under

mysterious circumstances. The official obituary stated that he died of a cerebral hemorrhage. Rommel was very popular among the troops, and Hitler could not have done otherwise: he was organized state

funeral.

The assassination attempt on July 20, 1944 was a shock not only for A. Hitler, but for the whole of Germany, and above all for the Wehrmacht. The German officer corps, which was so proud of its traditions, turned out to be involved in grave treason. Three famous field marshals died: one of them was hanged, the other two were forced to commit suicide. Dozens of senior generals were thrown into the Gestapo torture chambers and killed in the most shameful way.

Now about the material side of the Second World War. Undoubtedly, the war against the Soviet Union (the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945) became the main event of the Second World War, in the fire of which the Soviet people lost 26.6 million people. 1710 cities and towns, more than 70 thousand villages and villages, 32 thousand industrial enterprises, 4100 railway stations, 1870 railway bridges, 63 thousand kilometers of railway tracks were destroyed. 25 million people were left homeless. No country in the world has suffered such losses and material damage in the entire history of its existence. In the matter of increasing their well-being, the Soviet people were thrown back many decades.

Eastern Europe has been hit hard. The destructive tornado of war swept through the territory of Poland, Hungary, affected Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia with its wing.

Of course, other countries also suffered to some extent as a result of the Second World War. The losses of the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition amounted to: France - 600

thousand, USA - 405 thousand, Great Britain - 375 thousand, Canada - 37 thousand people. But at the same time, it

must be remembered that not a single settlement or enterprise was destroyed on the territory of the United States, and the country's national income doubled. Great Britain for the period from 1939 to 1945, according to British experts,

suffered losses of 4.2 billion pounds. But at the same time, during the war, there were positive changes in the British

economy: the scale of standardization of production and its equipping with modern equipment increased; aircraft industry, mechanical engineering,

production of strategic materials, such branches of production as electronic and radio engineering arose. A strong stimulus was given to the development of agriculture.

Germany itself lost 9.4 million people. The losses of its allies in the battles against the Soviet troops amounted to: Hungary - 809 thousand, Italy - 92 thousand, Romania - 475 thousand, Finland - 84 thousand, Slovakia - 67 thousand people.

And yet you need to understand that the Second World War "plowed" Eastern Europe several times. Material values were destroyed by both the advancing and retreating sides, and the more actively the battles were fought, the greater were the material losses. The war turned Eastern Europe into a huge ruin, the restoration of which required huge forces, funds and decades of hard work. After the end of the

war, this entire territory was "generously" transferred under the control of the Soviet Union, which, for the sake of restoring it, was again forced to go to the well-fed West with an outstretched hand, and pay for the surplus of its products with material values, taking away

their

from their own people.

Germany's recovery proceeded at a rapid pace. Hungary and Czechoslovakia were also restored quite quickly with the help of the Soviet Union. This process took place somewhat more slowly in Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria. However, by the end of the 1940s

years, all these countries have reached the level of their pre-war development.

The Soviet Union "slid" the most, despite the fact that by the end of the 40s it already had its own atomic bomb, and in the second half of the 50s it began space exploration. At the end of the 40s, another famine struck the victorious Soviet people, and a piece of bread became happiness, only by the end of the 50s were all major

villages

in Ukraine and Belarus, in the 60s, paved roads began to be laid to them. In 1965, the USSR for the first time celebrated Victory Day on May 9, 1945 as

National holiday. Then the medals "XX Years of Victory over Germany" were generously handed out to the people, who saw sausage on their table only on major holidays. Veterans-front-line soldiers traditionally raised a glass of "bitter" for the Victory and sang front-line songs, and in the morning of the next day, factory horns and calls for foremen called them again

on

enterprises and collective farm fields in order to fill the insatiable treasury of the Great Motherland and help her many friends in Eastern and Central Europe.

So, the conclusion suggests itself that the war between the USSR and Germany of 1941-1945 was prepared and provoked by third forces, led by international capitalism, whose roots grew from the USA and Great Britain, and branches were located in various other countries of the world. The war was waged with the aim of redistributing the world, access to sources of raw materials and markets. Eastern Europe was chosen as the main arena of struggle, but the flames of war also engulfed other territories in which world capital

had a certain interest. All other reasons for the war, especially ideological ones, were named in order to explain the motives for antagonism and struggle between specific leaders, in particular between Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin, between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.

First of all, Europe was washed with blood. The destruction inflicted on Great Britain was very minor. Not a single bomb fell on the territory of the United States. The level of post-war production in these countries has

increased significantly. US leadership in

everyone

world for many decades has become an indisputable fact. This was not a direct result of the armed struggle on the fronts of the Second World War, but was the result of a complex behind-the-scenes fuss, which is commonly called BOLINA POLICY. It is in this area that I. V. Stalin, who defeated A. Hitler, lost to third forces that decide the fate of the world to this day.

Instead of an epilogue

History does not tolerate subjunctive moods, therefore it must be recognized that in the history of mankind of the twentieth century there were both A. Hitler and I. V. Stalin. These personalities left an indelible mark on the history of Germany and the Soviet Union. Moreover, Germany, which I.V. Stalin won in 1945, survived the Soviet Union, which collapsed in 1991. It turns out that the dream of A. Hitler to crush the USSR came true and the territory of the once proud and independent country became a hunting ground for international capital, which has no respect for either its people or its culture.

Today in the world, and in Russia itself, there are people who, for the sake of their political or populist goals, put the personalities of A. Hitler and J. V. Stalin on the same level and offer to consider them exclusively in a

negative light. Moreover, much less has been said about the atrocities of the Nazis on Soviet soil lately than

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atrocities of the NKVD and the horrors of the Gulag. It turns out that I. V. Stalin was a more dangerous enemy for the Soviet people than A. Hitler?

How times are changing! How habits change! In silent bewilderment, a generation of Russians passes away, who experienced all the "charms" of Hitler's "new

order", the hardships of the Great Patriotic War and the joy of the Great Victory. Half-abandoned mass graves reproachfully look after the descendants of those who laid down their lives for the Motherland and for Stalin, rapidly moving away from them.

Yes, and for Stalin! A Russian man going to his death always needed an icon, on which he could cast his last earthly glance, and a name that could be shouted out in a deadly attack. Front-line soldiers remember that they attacked with shouts of "For the Motherland!", "For Stalin!". Whose names will be shouted out today if you have to rise to the last battle? It is good that there is still such a thing as the Motherland.

Homeland - the Russian Federation - part of the former Soviet Union is inexorably sliding into the position of third world countries. Industrial plants shut down

in the buildings of which shopping centers, banks, restaurants, warehouses open. The former wither away

collective farms, the village is dying, and it is almost impossible to see a herd of fifty cows, although back in the 70s many

farms had herds of thousands of cattle

livestock.

The Russian market was filled with industrial and food products of foreign origin. It is officially announced that over the past 20 years, the map of the country has disappeared

20

thousand villages and villages. The Russian people are degrading and dying out by the hundreds of thousands every year. And from

Russia itself, through thousands of different arteries, exports raw materials abroad: crude oil, natural gas, wood ... A victory that Hitler could not even dream of in the early 40s !!!

But the fact is that Hitler, having lost the war to the Soviet Union, found his inglorious end in the courtyard of the Imperial Chancellery. Any attempts by those who are trying to develop this topic, I

just seem pathetic. The Fuhrer has played his part in history, and neither alive nor dead is he of any interest to her. But

the history of Germany in the second quarter of the twentieth century is interesting, its

ups and

fall, which could teach mankind a lot if they were willing to study it. But humanity consists of generations, and the younger

generations often do not want to understand the older ones, wanting to go their own way. And again they talk about the superiority of one nation over another, about the right of the chosen ones to dispose of the world's wealth, about the right of

strength and the lack of rights of weakness ... and shots are fired, and human blood is shed.

I do not idealize and do not justify IV Stalin. His harsh policies killed millions of people. For the sake of achieving mythical ideas, he sacrificed the good of his own people. No one will erase from the book the history of the repressions of the 1930s. The people of the victorious country lived in poverty, the peasants, like serfs, were chained to their collective farms.

At the same time, one cannot but admit that he pulled the country devastated by the First World War, the Civil War and the Great Patriotic War into a number of leading powers of the world. He created an army that broke the back of the fascist army, which had previously put on

knees

almost all of Europe. Under I.V. Stalin, the USSR became the second nuclear power in the world and came close to space exploration. For decades, we, ordinary citizens of the USSR, have been sincerely proud of our country, and this is worth a lot for its history.

The personality of I. V. Stalin himself was also complex. He did not have a family as such, although he was attached to children. But after the captivity of the eldest son Jacob

He

as if he had deleted him from his life, and even the news of his death did not seem to touch the heart of the "steel" father.

The second son of Stalin, Vasily, became a military pilot during the war years and quickly made a service career. He met the victorious year of 1945 as a colonel and commander of an aviation division. After the war, he was commander of the aviation of the Moscow military district, rose to the rank of lieutenant general. But in reality, Vasily Iosifovich, who bore the surname Stalin, did very little in the service. By nature he was a gambler and a reveler. He was fond of sports, but not the wrestling itself on the sports ground, but the fact that he created sports teams and "cheered" for their success. Vasily had a difficult relationship with his father.

It is known that Joseph Vissarionovich visited his son only once, in March 1951, on the day of his 30th birthday. The son also

did not often meet his father. During the Great Patriotic War, he crossed the threshold of his Kremlin office only seven times.

Vasily Stalin developed a tense relationship with L.P. Beria. Later, some researchers explained this solely by the intrigues of the insidious Lavrenty Pavlovich. But there is another opinion. O. S. Smyslov in the book "Vasily Stalin.

Hostage of the name" writes: "Beria (since 1938 - People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR) stopped Vasily's permissiveness. He reported to I. V. Stalin about the fun and adventures of his son. Secondly, unlike most of the people surrounding I.V. Stalin, L.P. Beria was the only one who did not consider Vasily's close relationship, did not kowtow to him, like many others. Very often, Lavrenty Pavlovich put the son of the leader in his place. Hence the confrontation."

Vasily was arrested in April 1953. During the investigation of physical measures

no pressure was applied to him, but when he sobered up, he was so frightened that he himself talked about everything incessantly.

Vasily Stalin was married several times. His first wife, Galina Alexandrovna Burdonskaya, died in the early 90s, the second, Ekaterina Semyonovna, daughter of Marshal of the Soviet Union S.K. Timoshenko, passed away in the autumn of 1988 all alone in her

huge four-room apartment in Moscow on Gorky Street. There was also a third - Kapitolina Vasilyeva. I. V. Stalin did not enter into close contact with the wives of his son, but it is known that Kapitolina, in order to maintain the family budget, more than once transferred money, bypassing her husband.

The only daughter Svetlana, according to many, was the favorite of I.V. Stalin. After his death and the arrest of Vasily Stalin, no one touched her. Nevertheless she wrote

a letter to G. M. Malenkov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, in which she decided to give up "some of the rights granted to my family as superfluous, enjoy

which I do not consider possible. Among the refusals were the dacha "Volynskoye" with maintenance and a financial allowance in the amount of 4 thousand rubles a month. Then she drove out

abroad. Engaged in journalism, lived on royalties from writing and on

donations from private citizens and organizations.

There has never been a warm family relationship between Svetlana Alliluyeva and Vasily Stalin, as between a sister and a brother. Vasily led a wild life, most of all he was interested in issues abstracted from family matters. Svetlana is one of those who knew

called her people "a real demon in a monastic cassock."

Officially, I.V. Stalin had eight grandchildren: two along the line of Yakov Dzhugashvili, four - along the line of Vasily Stalin, two - along the line of Svetlana Alliluyeva. Later, Svetlana recalled: "Strange, my father knew and saw only three of his eight grandchildren - my children and daughter Yasha. Gulya evoked genuine tenderness in him. (The daughter of Yakov Dzhugashvili and Yulia Meltzer was brought

up in the house of I.V. Stalin until the autumn of 1943. - Auth.). And even stranger - my son, half-Jewish, the son of my first husband (whom my father never even wanted to meet) - evoked his tender love. I remember how I was afraid of the first meeting of my father with my Oskan ... Father saw Oskan two more times

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the last time four months before death ... "



The grandchildren of I.V. Stalin do not support special family relations among themselves. Moreover, in recent years, in the light of increased interest in the personality of the grandfather, relations between them have become colder. In 1953, the Council of Ministers of the USSR adopted a resolution establishing for all the grandchildren of I.V. Stalin, including Vasily's children, a personal pension until graduation from educational institutions - 1 thousand rubles each.

Vasily Stalin had four children from his first two marriages. In the first marriage with Galina Alexandrovna Burdonskaya, the son Alexander was born in 1941, and in 1943

—  
daughter Hope. From the second marriage with Ekaterina Semyonovna Timoshenko - in 1949, the son Vasily, and in 1950 - the daughter Svetlana. Alexander Vasilievich Burdonsky graduated from the directing department of GITIS, worked for decades at the Theater of the Soviet (Russian) Army. Nadezhda Vasilievna studied at the theater, but did not graduate from it. She lived in Georgia, where she studied again, but after the third year she left the institute and returned to Moscow. She went out

married the son of the writer A. A. Fadeev. She died in 1999. Vasily Vasilyevich studied  
V

institute in Tbilisi. He became addicted to drugs, from which he died in 1972. Svetlana Vasilievna was ill, for a long time she was treated in neuropsychiatric hospitals.

Later it became known about another grandson along the line of the eldest son of Yakov Dzhughashvili - Evgeny Yakovlevich. He was not recognized by I. V. Stalin, was completely deprived of communication with his grandfather and was not recognized by the rest of the "legal" descendants of the leader.

Today, the name of Stalin evokes different feelings in different people. Some have hatred for him, others recognize his state merits, others worship him as

idol. Everyone has their own arguments, and behind each is the truth. But time passes, and some arguments outweigh others, one truth drowns out the other.

In 2009, Central Television decided to conduct an all-Russian poll under the motto "Your Name, Russia." Hundreds of names of prominent politicians, military leaders, scientists, and cultural figures were nominated for the competition. For each name there was a public discussion, during which a clear democratic direction was traced. I. V. Stalin took second place in terms of the number of votes, slightly losing to Alexander Nevsky. In 2010, during the celebration of the 65th anniversary of the Great Victory, portraits of I.V. Stalin were installed on the streets of many cities, including Moscow. This speaks volumes.

At the same time, one must understand that the leaders who have passed away will never be able to lead the country and people to their cherished goal, and people want to live in a strong and prosperous state that would love and care for its citizens. Then the citizens will love and respect their leaders. After all, true love should be mutual. For

this

any person should carefully listen and look closely at the authorities, and  
power in

its concerns about people should take all the best from what various leaders recognized by history possessed.